

SIGHTS
IN
THE GOLD REGION,
AND
SCENES BY THE WAY.

BY
THEODORE T. JOHNSON.

“ Hope with a goodly prospect feeds the eye,
Shows from a rising ground possession nigh;
Shortens the distance or o'erlooks it quite;
So easy 'tis to travel with the sight.”—*DRYDEN*.

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P R E F A C E

SEIZED with the *gold fever* and resolved to judge of the wealth of El Dorado by *actual observation*, I embarked in one of the first steamers which sailed from New York, after the public announcement of the wonderful and extensive gold discoveries. Thus having obtained much information as well as considerable experience, I have written the following narrative during the leisure of a brief sojourn in the country, since my recent return from California.

I have not the vanity to suppose that I can encourage or discourage emigration to that region, and much less the wish to do either.

As I crossed the Isthmus both during the *dry* and the *rainy season*, and also visited the *gold region*, it was my design to furnish at the close of this work a separate chapter of details for the use of the emigrant; but it soon became apparent that in no way could this service be rendered so effectually, as in the regular course of the narrative.

Having faithfully endeavoured to give as succinct and correct an account as possible, of my experience and observation, I hope that, discarding all *wilful* error and prejudice, the occasional *expression* of my own views may not be objected to, however they may be differed from.

With these few remarks, I respectfully submit the succeeding pages to the indulgence of their readers.

T. T. J.

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SIGHTS IN THE GOLD REGIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. Embarkation. Incidents of the Voyage. Arrival at Chagres.

“THE latitude of Richmond and climate of Italy”—the gold of Ophir—the silver, red wood, and cedar of Solomon’s Temple—the lovely valley of the Sacramento—the vineyards of France, indigo of Hindostan, and wheat of America; and, more magnificent still, the placers of golden rocks in the mountains, and rivers of gold in the valleys, who, who would not go to California? and echo answered, “Who?” For not a ticket could be had in the Pacific steamers—not a Berks’ washer, Colt’s or Allen’s revolver, spade, pick, shovel, tin pan, or India-rubber outfit, but by contract, premium, or transfer.

Yes, the *yellow fever* was upon us; and in company with thousands of our go-ahead countrymen,

we were off to the El Dorado of the Pacific, sure we were right, because we had a colonel's and governor's report in our pockets. Provided, through the influence of a kind friend, with a transferred ticket for the steamer on the Pacific, we embarked, on the 5th of February, in the steam-ship "Crescent City," Captain Charles Stoddard, from New York, for Chagres. The thick-falling snow and spohy wharf dampened not our ardour; but we only longed the more to be away from these inhospitable shores, where only common potatoes and similar products grew, and where gold could only be had in the shape of alloyed coin—to the delightful region where the products of tropical and temperate zones outvied each other in the same genial soil, and where gold (except the two massive lumps) had to be removed from under the coulter of the industrious ploughman.

Thus the fever raged; and there seemed to be no remedy but a change of air, climate, and diet.—The scene of our departure presented a spectacle ludicrous, animated, and extraordinary. The decks of our steamer were crowded to suffocation with departing adventurers and their friends—our ribs were in danger of fracture from the pressure of the crowd—our shins from contusion against the gold machines, forcing-pumps, crowbars, shovels, axes, picks, pocket-pistols, and pick-pockets, and our own lungs of collapse from returning the excited cheers of the multitude. The wharves and shipping,

including three or four ocean steamers, crowded with a dense throng to witness our departure—the firing of cannon from the ship and shore, re-echoed by cheer after cheer—a vigorous snow-ball campaign among the b'hoys, mingled with the waved handkerchiefs of the gentler sex, and the unuttered emotions of parting, fixed an abiding record in the volumes of our memories.

As we passed slowly out of the docks, shouts arose of “Bring me a pocketful of rocks;” “Don’t forget the washers round the Horn;” “Oh, don’t you cry for me, my dear, I’m coming back again;” and, Jim, “you forget your life-preserver,” answered by, “Well, I’ll get one at the bar.” Thus, we commenced our long voyage and journeyings to the promised land, with upwards of three hundred passengers, composed of no discreditable specimen of the energy and enterprise of the universal Yankee nation; and clad in all sorts of costumes, from a Broadway top-coat and cloth cap, to a boatman’s pea-jacket and nor-wester, and from a western hunting-shirt and wild cat, to a *bona fide* Mexican blanket and sombrero. Pistols, bowie-knives, rifles, and revolvers, slung over our shoulders, and stuck in our belts; and one valiant company of fierce and daring men shouldered the terrible musket and flashing bayonet, while around the neck of a distinguished warrior hung the alarm trumpet, to sound the brazen charge to victory or death.

Steaming rapidly down the magnificent bay of

New York, we met the long-expected steamer United States, and welcomed the sea-boat home of the safe voyagers with enthusiastic shouts, which they returned with good will, no doubt congratulating themselves at bidding adieu to the world of waters on which we were so soon to be tossed. The clouds which in the morning had filled the air with fast-driving snow, now betook themselves to the upper atmosphere, and soon we dismissed our pilot, charged with numerous farewell letters to our friends and families. Then, with giant arms, our gallant ship dashed on her course ; and we turned our eyes for one more adieu to the eastern shores of our native land, conscious, as they disappeared from our strained vision, that the stormy Atlantic and wide Pacific, and our great western continent, with its towering peaks and rolling prairies must soon separate us from the loved thresholds from which we wandered. Few of our adventurers saw the glories of the declining sun on this our first day at sea ; for the unrelenting misery of sea-sickness had seized upon most of them, and old Neptune was freely entertained with the loud publication of " New York in slices," over the side. Fortunately, exempted from this infliction, ample opportunity was afforded us for observing the scenes on board, and the magnificence of the surrounding ocean.

The horizon on every side shut in with dark wind clouds, and the increased rolling and pitching of the ship, betokened a growing sea ; and

our anticipations of the sublimity of the ocean were thus realized on the following day; for on every side the white-capped waves were curling around our bark of safety, in scornful defiance, while her ponderous wheels, with unceasing revolution, clove their steady course through the contending flood—on one side submerged in foam, on the other grasping with vain energy at the rushing waters.

It is not, however, our intention to inflict upon our readers a minute description of the voyage. On the following day we were in the Gulf Stream, and off the famous Cape Hatteras; the ship steaming and driving with all sails set before a stiff nor-west wind, which soon changed to the westward, causing a strong and heavy cross sea, and making it necessary for those on deck to hold on, keeping a bright look out to leeward; where a sudden arrival of some poor wight in the scuppers was announced by shouts of laughter from his more fortunate companions. In the cabins below the scene was ludicrous in the extreme; the chairs, settees, sofas, and carpet were strewed with pale despairing castaways, to whom our polite and attentive stewardess, Mrs. Young, was a mother in grief, not to mention the continual gingle which she industriously maintained among tea-cups and spoons, and the fiz-whiz of Seidlitz powders, for which there was a perpetual outcry, or rather a dying moan, from floor and sofa. One poor fellow vowed he would be buried in the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean next day, and

no where else, while several engaged their passage home from Chagrès.

It was a subject of regret that there were no ladies on board to enliven us with their presence and conversation, and remind us of the home scenes we were so rapidly receding from. Nevertheless, among our large body of passengers, much order and harmony prevailed, and we could not but remark the general good conduct and character of all on board, representing as they did nearly every State in the Union, and most of the professions, trades, and pursuits of life.

Surely it is an extraordinary spectacle when men of industry, sobriety, talents, and good character at home, are willing to forego for a considerable period all the advantages which they there possessed, and to venture upon voyages and travels of danger and hardship, of more than six thousand miles, to the west coast of America, for the acquisition of gold as miners or traders only. Men of this class have gone out to California with the confident expectation of accumulating rapidly abundant means to liquidate honourably just claims upon some; and all with the hope of providing comfortable independence for themselves and families. And to them will be accorded all the commendation due to an enterprise unparalleled on so large a scale in the history of the world.

In a few days we welcomed the balmy air of the South, and our invalid passengers, availing them-

selves of the smooth sea, thronged the deck, some with books, some with amusements, all enjoying the scene according to their inclination.

We spent the lovely moonlight evenings with songs and chorus, or in listening to the flute and violin. When our national airs were played, enthusiastic cheers resounded through the ship; the Marseilles hymn elicited three cheers for the French republic; and when finally our gentlemanly and jolly captain performed a sailor hornpipe in first-rate style, nine cheers roared around the decks and up the shrouds, till the ship almost danced in chorus.

Though we were out of the regular track of coasting vessels we passed several sail, and spoke, second day out, a beautiful brig going right before the wind, with studding sails aloft and aloof. She presented a most animated and beautiful appearance, rising gracefully to every wave like a swan, her snowy wings just opened to the breeze; we exchanged cheers with her passengers, and requested them to report us all well.

On the afternoon of February 10th, our fifth day out, we hove in sight of the Caycos Islands, a part of the Bahama group, covered with a range of low, undulating hills. The land was greeted by all as a pleasant sight, the first that had met our view since the high lands of Neversink. This afternoon, the awnings on deck shaded a merry and pleasant crowd; and all remarked the good feeling, order,

and sobriety, which universally prevailed on board. The call for grub was over, and all betook themselves to knife and fork with a will, at which we few old salts congratulated them.

Again, we beheld with admiration the gorgeous hues of the evening sky, and one by one the stars shone out, the heavenly host led on by Venus, now the evening star, whose effulgence in the tropics is so vastly superior to that in the North, as to cast its beams across the ocean in miniature rivalry with the bright queen of night.

Soon she arose, and cast the light of her full orb upon the sea and ship, and this night she was, indeed, to us, a messenger of mercy, for in half an hour after her rising, the engine was suddenly stopped, and the cry of breakers ahead passed with electric rapidity from stem to stern. Going forward, we beheld with awe the surf and white beach of a small island on both bows; the ship seeming to be in a little cove within a mile of the shore, and going stern on, ten knots an hour. The island proved to be Little Inagua, uninhabited except by turtle, and our escape from wreck was most providential, as most of the Bahamas have coral reefs extending far into the sea. The lookout man in the fore-top had gone to sleep, the first mate, who was officer of the deck, had failed to see the danger, and a sailor off duty first gave the alarm.

The following day we saw the granite-bound

shores and cloud-capt hills of San Domingo, and soon after, on our starboard bow clearly traced the lesser heights of the east end of Cuba; thus having in sight at the same time the two greatest and most perverted island paradises of the West Indies.

This day was our first Sunday upon the ocean, and nearly all attended divine service conducted by the Rev. Albert Williams, of the Presbyterian denomination, concluding with the beautiful tune of Old Hundred; "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," which from our united voices pealed out upon the sea, through companion, hatchway, and port hole.

The east end of Cuba was now in plain sight, presenting a succession of rocky cliffs and barren mountains, intersected with deep, dark ravines running toward the coast. This end of the island is not susceptible of cultivation; but produces the well-known copper mines.

Being now well through the Windward Passage, we saw next morning the large and beautiful Island of Jamaica; its villas and coffee plantations covering the hill sides in every direction. As we gazed upon the mountains capped with fleecy clouds, or diversified with sunlight and shadow, and beheld the beautiful valleys at their base, we felt that Nature at least had done her part, in bestowing profusely her richest bounties and highest advantages.

Enervated by our sudden and rapid transition from the cold winter of the North to the uniform

heat of the tropics, we now welcomed the refreshing trade winds; which, with the steady roll of the Caribbean Sea, and the white-capped billows flashing in the bright sunlight, caused the most delicious exhilaration of spirits.

As we neared the termination of our voyage at Chagres, we were discussing all sorts of plans for crossing the Isthmus; and some of the great men among us, the militia colonels, doctors, and bearers of despatches, presided over our deliberations, or spouted in the most affective mass-meeting style. All this resulted in the appointment of mule, boat, and baggage committees, which ended only in delay, vexation and trouble, although they exerted themselves to the utmost.

At noon of February 14th, the cry of "Land O!" announced the shores of South America, and we were quickly on deck gazing at the wished-for sight. We soon neared the coast and sailed some fifty miles in full view; the shores bold with high hills rising in broken aspect one above another, covered to the water's edge, and even the rocks in the sea, with the profuse and extraordinary verdure of the tropics; displaying every imaginable hue of tree, flower, and plant, giving to the whole coast a feathery appearance, for no other word will describe the exuberant growth. In the distance, we gazed upon the famous Andes, and at 4 P. M. came to anchor amidst a furious shower of rain; a sort of

welcome from the Isthmus and specimen of the *dry season*.

We now occupied ourselves in closing letters to friends, and in preparing to disembark, after which we had leisure to view the entrance to the Chagres River, guarded by the picturesque old Spanish fort of San Lorenzo situated on a commanding eminence, and to watch the careering buzzards and clumsy pelicans for ever hovering over the town of Chagres, a few huts only of which could be seen from the ship, with the graceful palmetto and cocoa-nut trees in the distance.

CHAPTER II.

Chagres. Castle of San Lorenzo. Old Ram Hoscanoas. Bungoes.
Patrones, Pigs, and Perros.

A JABBER of bad Spanish, intermingled with yells of *vamos* and *caramba*, or another more common and vulgar oath, saluted us as we looked over the side next morning, at the strange scene below. Large *dug-outs*, or canoes, made from the single trunk of the bay tree, or common mahogany, surrounded the ship, filled with Negroes, Indians, and Creoles, nearly, or quite naked; rolling up the whites of their eyes at us, and vociferating for cargo in tones that were a caution to orang-outangs. Their ludicrous gestures, mingled with the outlandish and eternal clatter of their tongues, afforded abundant amusement, which was further enhanced by their continual alarm at the frequent collision of their boats, and the raps which they received on the head or shoulders from descending trunks, bales, and boxes. The Negroes appeared to be a mixture of the African and Moorish race, the thick lips and woolly hair being in many of them accompanied with straight or somewhat aquiline noses, while the nostril of the full-blooded Congo revealed an amplitude sufficient to contain several of the new

potatoes of Gotham market. The Indians were few in number, and diminutive in appearance, manifesting the common characteristic of their race—a dogged submission to the necessity of labour. Both Negroes and Indians were evidently beneath the control of the Creoles, who were generally the patrones or captains, and owners of the boats—the least dash of the blood of the white man being sufficient to assert either the supremacy or tyranny of his race here, as in other countries.

Having disposed all our baggage in readiness for landing, and maintained possession of the lighter articles, we took our seats in one of the ship's boats, and were rowed ashore—a distance of some three miles, to the town of Chagres. As we bid adieu to the gallant steamer which had borne us with speed and safety over 2,200 miles of ocean, we realized more completely the nature and length of our journey. Now commenced the hardships and discomforts of our route: the comforts and luxuries of home were behind us, the dreaded Isthmus and comparatively unknown Pacific coast before. The only reflection, however, which we bestowed upon the matter was, that the way was before us, and we were going ahead.

As we approached the shore, we gazed with admiration upon the picturesque and romantic old Spanish Castle of San Lorenzo, whose dark and ruined battlements, crowning the bold bluff at the entrance of the river, looked with proud desolation out upon the sea,

which, with the eternal war of breakers, was still bidding defiance to the hoary hand of Old Time, whose relentless grasp had thrown parapet and gun to the base of the cliff. The forsaken watch-tower of the sentry, covered with dank moss and crumbling decay, tenanted now only by the screaming wild fowl, afforded a melancholy lesson to us in the thought, that while the demon of war deserts his ancient abodes, it is only to gird his loins with new panoply; and aided by the science of modern times, to go forth in greater "pomp and circumstance," to the feast of blood. We afterwards visited the interior of this fortress; and ascending the hill by the old paved road, entered at the principal gateway by a drawbridge extended over a wide and deep fosse encircling the entire work, but now quite dry and green with tropical verdure. Within the walls we found numerous old cannon, mostly dismounted, and covered with rust; and on some of them could decipher the date 1745, with the Royal Arms of Spain. Beyond this outer fort was the main citadel, on the verge of the cliff, towards the ocean, and approached by still another drawbridge, isolated also by a separate fosse. Here were some brass cannon in better preservation, and the entrance to the magazine, containing some damp and useless old powder. The view from the battlements we found extensive and very beautiful. To the northward and eastward stretched away the blue Caribbean Sea, to the southward and westward

rose the varied peaks of the Andes, of the Isthmus, while at our feet lay the town of Chagres, with the mouth of the river, almost concealed from view by the immense variety of tropical vegetation.

Such pleasing impressions, however, were soon forgotten on the occasion of our first landing in the far-famed Chagres. Here were, indeed, Pluto's dominions, and here was the veritable Styx. Amidst hundreds of canoes, our boat was forced up on the low, sandy beach, and we jumped ashore to find ourselves surrounded by a host of Charons, whose dark visages and rude paddles belied not the comparison. As soon as we could escape from the yells of "*Canoa! canoa! a Cruses! a Gorgona!*" and the incessant demand for *riales* and *pesos*, we strolled into the town, which we found to consist of about two hundred and fifty bamboo huts, with high-peaked roofs of dried palmetto leaves, situated in a complete morass—the streets or lanes exhibiting the remains of a species of rough paving, and filled with a confused mixture of dogs, hogs, naked children, Negroes and Creoles. All was excitement, wonder, and amazement at the tremendous irruption of Americanos. The women abandoned their corn pounding, or relinquished hair combing in the doorways—the children, with a jerk, released their heads from the searching process, and gathered around us—the latter all being *a la Cupid*, though not without dressing either, being enormously stuffed *a la Falstaff*, exciting our laughter continually. The

women dressed suitably to the climate, with naught but petticoat and chemise, seemed transported with the novelty and excitement. The innumerable lank, miserable dogs and pigs, left sole occupants of the huts, availed themselves with activity of the chance to play an extensive and voracious game of cribbage; and the disgusting but useful buzzards, gathered in solemn rows on the house-tops, to view the unwonted commotion in their favourite haunts.

Presently we saw approaching the tall and stately *padre* of the town, arrayed in his priestly robes of rich black silk and shovel sombrero. As he passed, every one bowed respectfully, and he returned all with courtesy. He was going to attend the funeral of a child said to have died from the bite of a centipede—a most unusual, and even in this instance, doubtful circumstance.

Not having the fear of the “Chagres fever,” before our eyes, we wandered through the whole of this delectable village, and found scarcely a house but presented some new or ridiculous scene—some odd or disgusting exhibition. Very few of the huts contained more than one room. In the ground-floor in the centre were large rough stones; between these the fire was kindled for cooking purposes. An iron pot or pan placed upon the stones contained coffee, frijoles, or tortillas, while seated on the ground the women attended to the cooking, and combed their hair at intervals. Pigs wandered in

and out quite unmolested; and *perros*, or dogs, without number, thrust inquisitive noses into larder, pot, and pan, disturbed but rarely, and then only by a shout, as these people have a greater regard for their dogs than their children; which we could only account for by observing that the former being quite hairless, occasioned none of the trouble inseparable from the woolly crowns of the bipeds. Even this ingenious theory was subsequently demolished; for we saw some of the people living on pickings and stealings, in more senses than one. Laziness and listlessness seemed to prevail among all. Every house had the everlasting hammock, in which they sleep at night and lounge all day. The women were slip-shod, or barefoot—the men ragged or hatless; and all were dirty and greasy. A flock of buzzards could feast on their live carcasses a day.

Returning from our ramble we joined a crowd of our countrymen, congregated with indignant gesticulation around the large barn-like hut of an old Creole trader and canoe man, whom we denominated by the soubriquet of Old Ram Hos.

The committee sent ashore the previous day had made a contract in writing with them, engaging a sufficient number of canoes for a specified sum, to convey all of us with our baggage to Cruces or Gorgona. The terms were highly liberal on our part, being dictated solely by themselves. When the contract was signed, the committee proposed to

have it certified by the Alcalde, or chief magistrate of the town, but to this very correct and usual procedure they strenuously and most indignantly objected: no, indeed, they were gentlemen, men of honour; their word was as good as their bond. The committee finally yielded the point, chiefly relying upon the liberal sum agreed to be paid by us. Surprised at our facile compliance with their original demand, they determined at once to bolt from their contract, and had now done so, demanding the most exorbitant prices for canoes.

The remonstrances and threats of Captain Stoddard on our behalf were for a long time unavailing, when our patience becoming quite exhausted, revolvers were quickly put in efficient condition, and bowie knives made their persuasive appearance. "Whip the rascal, fire his den, burn the settlement, annex the Isthmus," were heard on all sides. Fortunately for themselves the high contracting parties understood English, and their ears being sensitive at the moment, and their nerves more so, the dirty brown of their complexion speedily changed to a liver white, and they came down in their villanous demands, barely in time to save their shantec from a come down on their heads. Their rascality, however, was in the main accomplished, in the way which they had cunningly foreseen and intended; for many of our impetuous young men, led by the example, of a few selfish and calculating old travellers among us, and wearied with delay, had

engaged canoes for themselves, making private bargains on the best terms they could; but even then they were frequently deprived of a canoe after the bargain was concluded, on the plea that others would pay more. As soon as their game was understood by us, we quietly selected and took possession of the canoes which we required, agreeing to pay them eight dollars each person for passenger canoes, and at the rate of about three dollars per hundred pounds for baggage to Cruces, or Gorgona, half to be paid in advance.

Anxious now to be off, our party of four took possession of a light little canoe or dug-out, provided, as in all cases, with a bongo, or species of roof made of the branches and leaves of the palmetto, extending some six or eight feet in length, and just high enough to creep under upon our hands and knees; leaving space enough at the stern for the *patron*, or captain, who, with a short, broad paddle both aided to propel and steer the canoe. The *patron* was a little, nimble Creole of Porto Bello, named Leon; his face strongly marked with smallpox, and seeming to be full of eyes, as the two small and piercing black orbs with which his countenance was garnished, were eternally dancing like fire-flies in every direction. Speaking a little English, of which accomplishment he was very vain, his tongue kept time with his eyes in an incessant fandango of bad Spanish and worse English. Stationed in the bows of the canoe was

Pantaleon, a Negro lad, silent, strong and industrious; and the poor fellow had need of all these qualities, for on him devolved the hard work of poling up stream against the rapid current. At length, after two hours more delay in getting these worthies into the canoe, and providing bottles of water to last us above tide; in beating dogs, pigs, and poultry off from our provisions, and escaping from the crowd of *patrones* and canoe-men, we commenced our voyage up the Rio Chagres, with our expert navigators surnamed Loon and Pantaloön, both bereft of the latter article, but provided with a coarse, short shirt, some sausages, and a bottle of Cogniac, which we observed was not long to last.

CHAPTER III.

Ascent of the Chagres River. Scenes and Incidents. Gatun. Dos Hermanos. Palenquilla. A Night on the River and one on the Shore. Monkeys. Iguana. Parrots. Shooting Alligator. Arrival at Gorgona.

REJOICED at our release from the vexatious annoyances and tedious delays of Chagres, we commenced our journey towards the Pacific with renewed spirit.

Entering the river immediately from the little cove at the mouth of which lies Chagres, our senses were entranced by the beauty of the scene that opened upon us. Every faculty was at once absorbed in admiration of the earthly paradise which surrounded us.

The river itself, a beautiful, limpid stream about fifty yards wide, was dotted in every direction with the gondola-shaped canoes, some descending the middle of the current with great rapidity, others, like our own, stemming the quiet water by the green shore; while from beneath the shady bungo we watched the flashing paddles, or gazed with unsated eyes upon the glorious scenery, listening amidst the thousand strange warblers of the groves for some familiar song, or startled by the

wild cry of the canoe-men as they shouted to each other from every turn in the perpetually winding-stream.

Neither pencil nor pen can do justice to the surpassing views ever present to the eye of the traveller on this river. Varying in width from fifty to one hundred yards, its crystal waters roll over a clear, pebbly, or bright, sandy bottom, pursuing a perfectly labyrinthine course, embracing here the entire base of some spur of the mountain, or there forming an island in the vale; thus traversing nearly fifty miles, when the direct course from the head of navigation to the coast is only about twenty miles.

The shores, at first low and marshy, soon become more elevated, and are crowned with the most exuberant and abundant vegetation. Nature seems to have bestowed here even more than tropical profusion; for, as in the forests of Brazil, there appears to be no space unoccupied by tree or plant, flower or vine. The banana and plantain, the palmetto, the graceful coccoa-nut and cabbage tree, the papa and mango, bearing their delicious fruit; the pine apple, orange and lime, were seen in all directions; while among the endless groves, we could occasionally spy the tall sugar cane growing spontaneously and in the greatest luxuriance. The air was redolent with fragrance from innumerable varieties of flowers, and the woods resounded with the melody of feathered songsters of the most delicate or gorgeous

plumage, or echoed with the noisy chatter and scream of monkeys and parrots.

Through such new and enchanting scenes we pursued our winding way, scarce conscious of the lapse of time till the setting sun cast his crimson and mellow light upon the hill side, valley and stream, and the darkening shadows of wood and ravine recalled wanderers of earth and air to rest and repose.

The transition from daylight to darkness is of course very sudden within the tropics ; but although deprived of the delightful hour of our northern twilight, we were fully compensated by the dazzling beauty of the night. The moon and stars shone with wonderful brilliancy, and the air was filled with large fire flies, sparkling like gems of sapphire.

While enjoying the novelty of the scene, our canoe-men struck up a wild, nasal chant, a sort of Spanish improvisatore, which Leon informed us was about "de good canoe, de good casa, and de good mohare," the latter alluding to house and wife.

Proceeding thus for three or four hours, we saw the lights of habitations on shore ; and the barking of dogs, crying of children and beating of drums, soon apprised us of our approach to the village of Gatun.

Forcing our canoe into a regular flotilla, we scrambled up the banks, and following the direction of the sounds and sights, were quickly in the midst of the villagers. Here we found others of our

countrymen, and received, like them, a cordial welcome. A table was spread in front of one of the principal houses in the street, covered with clean cloth, and sundry odd-looking red earthen jugs, jacks, and jars. Acceding without ceremony to the polite invitation of a very pretty Creole senorita,

“ We each took a smack
Of the blood-red jack,”

and then fell to it with eager appetites upon tortillas, fresh rolls, cakes, and, in fact, all eatables, within reach, to the great dismay of the Gatunos. The cry for *café meantuire* rose loud and long; but we found the only way to obtain it was to cease eating; for, like the Spanish, these people could not be made to comprehend that the Americanos drank their coffee with their food, instead of at the close of the meal, as is their custom. This afterward occasioned many ludicrous scenes, and *bothered* both los Yankees and their entertainers more than a little.

Paying cheerfully the few riales demanded for our meal, we took our way further into the village, and found the principal street well swept, and crowded by the jabbering and merry natives. The beating of a small monotonous drum, betokened the incessant fandango; but the excitement about the Americanos and the pesos or dollars to be made out of them, seemed to absorb all else. We had determined, on first landing, to sleep here; but we had

not yet become sufficiently accustomed to the miserable huts, dirty hammocks, and insects smaller, but more dreaded by us than centipede or scorpion.

After some trouble we found Leon and Pantaleon, and to our orders to go-ahead, or *vamos*, they manifested much disappointment; but a cup of *café*, a fresh supply of cogniac, a promise of a shirt for each, quite reconciled them to proceed all night. With the eternal cigar, which was as constantly in their mouths as the paddle in their hands, we were quickly in the stream; and now came the tug of war to poor Pantaleon; for the river being low at this season, he was obliged to relinquish the easy paddle, and take to the laborious pole, forcing the canoe against a strong current by sheer muscular exertion. In this way we could only progress at the rate of one or two miles an hour, often being driven back—the strength of the current requiring the most unrelenting effort.

Leon, the patron, now displayed his laziness and rascality, as he would do nothing but steer the canoe and urge us to land. We at once proposed to throw him overboard, duck him, flog him, tie him, and stop his grog; but the fear of “no cogniac” restored him to duty. We, therefore, stowed ourselves away under our bungo, four in number, in a space eight feet long by two wide, the only way to manage being to “put our heads together,” and lie “spoon fashion,” and with our heavy pilot coats on,

the interstices were easily filled. Often were we aroused by the clatter of branches of sunken trees against our canopy, and as often lulled to repose again by the rocking canoe and rippling stream. It being the dry season, the early part of the nights were free from dews and fog; but as the morning approached, the miasma from the shores was oppressive and offensive in the extreme. At this hour we were also roused by the most extraordinary sounds, produced by monkeys, iguanas, and some of the larger varieties of the feathered tribes—the latter producing a noise resembling the violent collision of two stones under water, while the former seemed to have filled the forests with Chinese gongs innumerable, and thousands of steamboats, high and low pressure, blowing off in every direction. Beginning at a long distance, these sounds roared around us till Echo herself was confounded.

We welcomed the morning light as it quickly dispelled the mist; and the rising sun displayed to our view the little village of Dos Hermians, (or Two Brothers,) where we landed, and were speedily engaged in discussing our breakfast, consisting of thick, black mud and water called *café*, which was not too hot to allow the dogs occasionally to stir it up with their noses. “Taste not, touch not, handle not,” said one and all, as we turned our attention to claret and water for a time, and a coarse set of ragamuffin biscuits as a stay for our machs.

This day we got our fowling-pieces in order, and

obtained some wild turkey—numerous here but quite small; a species also of wild peacock, some blue and white heron, besides having a shot now and then at long distance for monkeys, parrots, and other birds nameless and unknown.

Approaching near to shore at mid-day, we saw on the sedgy margin a strange and ugly-looking creature, exactly answering to our ideas of a regular Egyptian crocodile in miniature. Giving him the contents of one barrel, he made a desperate effort to escape into the bushes; but Leon, active for once, shouting "*Iguana ! iguana !*" rushed after him, and soon returned, holding him by the tail, with gloating eyes, exclaiming, "*Bueno ! bueno ! huevos ! huevos !*"* It was of a greenish bronze, and dirty yellow, with scaly skin, four short legs with claws, a tail like a serpent, and head of lizard or crocodile, and about three feet in length from tip to tip. After satisfying our curiosity, we handed it over to Leon, who valued it as a great prize; and as we discovered at dinner time, extracted more than thirty eggs from it of the size of a quail's, having a tough, white skin, but no shell. These he boiled and tied in a row like Weathersfield onions, for after entertainment, considering them a great luxury. We know not which string would be most wholesome, but think the Weatherfielders would "*clare de kitchen*" soonest. We mean no offence, how-

* Good ! good ! eggs ! eggs !

ever, to our Yankee friends, and hope they will not turn up their noses at the odorous comparison.

This afternoon, while two of our party were availing themselves of a sand-beach to walk and collect agates, we were aroused from our siesta under the shady bungo, by a low, quick cry from Pantaleon, of "*Legator ! legator !*" and following the direction of his eager eye and bony finger, we saw what appeared at first to be the remains of a dead tree, grey from decay, lying near the edge of the water, about fifty yards distant, but which was really an alligator, and the first we had discovered. A ball was passed through his ugly head without further ceremony from Colt's large revolver, by one of the party who claimed to be a good shot, and proved himself such, at least on this occasion ; for head and tail, mud, blood, and water, flew up in the air, and the convulsed wretch floundered into the stream to meet a cordial reception from the jaws of his tribe. He was about five feet long, and the only specimen we saw, though some of our fellow-travellers met with them as long as nine feet, and quite in crowds.

Thus passed our second day on the Chagres ; but the last incident caused us to defer our purpose of bathing in the clear, soft water of the river, which, at this season, is also sweet and delicious to drink. We now began to inquire of every passing canoe, "*Quantos lagos a Gorgona ?*"—Spanish borrowed of lazy Leon for the occasion, and which answered

for our inquiry of, "How many leagues to Gorgona?" But they seemed to have no idea of distance, some answering quite differently from others; and, in fact, the number of leagues seemed to increase as we advanced. This was afterwards rendered more amusing by the explanation of an intelligent Spanish gentleman, that "down the river the distance was very short, but to Gorgona a great many leagues." Thus distance seemed to be measured, and pretty wisely too, by the difficulties of the way, and the time expended to overcome them. Full many a persevering or wearied traveller on the River of Life has found that, however laborious, tedious, or uncertain his ascent of that turbulent and winding stream during the active years of manhood, his descending bark, though guided mayhap, by the steady hand of experience, floats noiselessly, yet swiftly, in the rapid mid-current, while years dwindle to months, and months to days, as he watches for his entrance upon the great Ocean of Eternity.

The rascally Leon had faithfully promised us to arrive at Gorgona that evening in especial consideration of the two shirts begged the night previous; but the day declined into evening and evening into night, and yet the weary Pantaleon was straining to his bending pole, songless, silent, and now ominous event, even cigarless. In vain we offered him one by way of encouragement, and his loved Cogniac lay neglected at his feet. Exhausted Nature could

accomplish no more, and we marvelled not, after twenty-eight hours incessant labour without sleep, and almost without rest, so we hauled the canoe up on a sandy beach in a bend of the stream and made our camp there, building a fire to keep off mosquitoes and reptiles. Here we were greatly incensed at the mean and lazy Leon, for leaving Pantaleon to aid in making the fire, he rolled himself up in his dirty blanket and quickly disturbed the alligators by his barbarous snoring. We seriously discussed the propriety of burying him alive as a warning to all lazy *patrones*, when the suggestion that he was already well covered with soil caused us precipitately to abandon our benevolent intention. Before morning another canoe joined us, and its people gladly gathered around our fire. At two o'clock, the moon rising, we kicked lazy Leon into wakefulness and activity, and resumed our slow and toilsome progress. The following day we reached Palenquilla, a picturesque little hamlet on an elevated and level part of the shore. Near it we saw a large and beautiful plantation filled with sugar cane, while above and below, the margin of the river was gorgeous with every variety of tree, leaf, and plant, perfectly overgrown with vines bearing exquisite flowers; and one species of large tree was clothed completely with crimson passion flowers, in description similar to ours, but four times larger.

Just after our enjoyment of this scene, we were treated to another, highly ludicrous, and affording

much fun and gratification. We had reached a short turn in the stream, where the current was very strong over a pebbly bottom; in fact, there were rapids on a small scale. Pantaleon, immediately depriving his ebony form of his fashionable short skirts, leaped overboard, displaying above water only the outlines of a bust, capped by a pair of shoulders which, barring the colour, were as rounded, and shining, too, as any so freely disclosed by our extremely fashionable belles at home. Lazy Leon, obliged to follow his example, waded along for some time by the stern, aiding in the progress of the canoe, with vinegar countenance. Presently he relinquished his hold, intending to follow at his ease in our wake, but the current was so strong that he could barely keep his feet, making no progress; then commenced a volley of vociferations, yells, oaths, prayers, and commands to Pantaleon to return for him, but all in vain, for fun we had, and mischief we were bent on. So we called out to him, *no entiende*, (we don't understand,) speak English, Master Leon; come on board quick, quick, *quantos lagos a Gorgona*; all of which increased his fury, till, livid with rage, and well ducked, by losing his footing and being carried down the rapids, we hauled him on board, with the aid of Pantaleon's pole, and he returned to duty an altered man, as his whitened skin plainly betokened.

We now approached bolder shores, and observed trap-rock on some of the banks, while directly in

front of us uprose a mountain in the shape of an immense mass of conical verdure, from whose bowels the river seemed to gush into sudden being ; but we soon glided around its sweeping base, and beheld, on a high bluff beyond, Gorgona, "the place of rocks," and the welcome termination of our long pilgrimage of forty-one hours, for the accomplishment of as many miles in the tortuous and rapid Chagres.

CHAPTER IV.

Gorgona. Hotel Francaise. The Alcalde and his House. New Grenadian Justice. Self-Punishment of the Criminal. A Storm in the Chagres, and Dance at a Fandango. Camp of Engineers. Departure for Panama.

WE found at Gorgona a collection of about one hundred houses, and natives in all respects similar to those at Chagres, except that among the former were fewer Creoles. The scenery there partakes of a bolder and more varied character. From the high table-land on which the town is built, mountains rise in every direction, forming a complete amphitheatre perpetually reflected from the sparkling streamlet in their midst.

Gratified, however, as we had been with the beauty of the river, we gladly escaped from our confined and cramped position in the canoe, and ascending the precipitous bank, preceded by a string of natives carrying our traps, were ushered into an *adobie* house with tiled roof, denominated by the sounding title of Hotel Francaise. Here, joining more of our famished travellers, we made furious onslaught upon mule steaks and other delicacies of the season, washed down by some very good coffee.

and tea or claret. Breakfast, dinner, and tea were continually in progress from morning till night, and the "Francaise" was the crack hotel of the place. As the sleeping apartments, *id est*, the hammocks and floors, were all, however, "mortgaged" to previous comers, we were fain to take up our abode with the Alcalde, or chief magistrate of the town; who, besides being the richest man, was notorious as the greatest rascal and cheat in Gorgona.

The fellow was a mixture of the Spanish and Negro, wore spectacles for dignity, and was deaf for convenience: all unmistakable signs of a *big bug*. He dealt largely *in stocks*, and *on time*, too, as the wasted legs of many a poor lame duck of a native could testify. True, he did not drive his carriage, being unable to pony-up, for want of horse flesh, which was all made sweepstakes of for the only course furnished at his table.

He had, however, an extensive *turn-out* every day, as his lodgers testified that they were obliged to *flea* frequently, retreating from boot avenue with *four-in-hand*.

We also discovered that he was a *large operator* in pork which had died a natural death, and, in fact, it only remained for him to establish an extensive correspondence with the *other side*, and a well sustained system of advances on "bills of lading," in order to rank as a very prominent man abroad as well as at home.

Of such a distinguished host had we now become

the guest, sharing with many others, at a round sum, the hospitalities of his house, in common with sundry pigs, hogs, dogs, and naked children. The aforesaid house was built of *adobie*, or *sun-dried* bricks, or rather of mud walls, with bamboo and palmetto thatched roof, extending over a space of about twenty feet in width, by sixty in length, divided at each end into two small rooms ; while the grand apartment between, with doors and windows on both sides, served for both eating and sleeping. The ground floor, swept only on saints' days or holidays, was garnished with a large, rough deal table, benches of similar material, and a few chairs seated with mule or horse hide. From two rows of uprights that supported the roof, were suspended some eight or ten coarse and dirty grass hammocks, and in these such as were lucky enough to get possession, sought repose for the night. The first night of our arrival some fifty slept here, and besides two moored, stem and stern, in each hammock, the floor, tables, chairs, and benches, trunks and boxes, were occupied in a similar manner. The nights being cold in comparison with the day, we were obliged as well by other precautions to sleep in our clothes, retaining even overcoats, boots and hats. For though we saw neither centipede nor scorpions here, yet we considered some kind of covering for the head indispensable. The following day, becoming tired of eating mule steaks, dead pork, and iguana pie, we made a regular descent

upon the villagers, in search of bread, eggs, and oranges. Of these we obtained some, though at exorbitant prices. Finding that we would be detained a few days, awaiting the arrival of our baggage, we now sought out an old hut in another part of the village, occupied by a live Yankee named John Smith, of course, and there we feasted, for the remainder of our abode, on eggs and slap-jacks. With his two big *b'hoys* to assist him, this enterprising restaurateur employed every moment in turning the pancakes, which were as rapidly turned down by his crowd of hungry expectants.

The old rascal of an Alcalde had yet the audacity to charge us one dollar per day for board at his barn or stable, begging his pardon for the appellation, yet doubting if any respectable American horse would enter there, provided he had any regard for his standing, and more especially his repose.

Wandering through the village we found a few little shops, embellished sometimes with tancy china ware, but chiefly supplied with *aguardiente*, wines and cordials; and the rows of empty and half empty bottles showed that the money earned from the Americans had not subserved the cause of temperance.

Situated on a rising ground, we also discovered the old church or cathedral; and a ricketty old building it is, a large part being entirely in ruins, and the remainder, now in use, being enclosed on one side by a rude board partition, through the chinks

of which we could perceive the altar and the images of various saints. The padre whom we met and conversed with was very polite, especially when he learned that we abode with the Alcalde, with whom it was said he was a partner. He very kindly urged us not to go to Panama too soon, as the cholera and yellow fever would be there at this season. We thanked him, and played at the game of politeness so well, that one of our number obtained his horse for the journey; and a good one he proved to be, though at a good round price.

In this climate we were told it was unsafe for strangers to bathe much in cold water; but determined, at least, to try the experiment, we wended our way early one beautiful morning to a sandy beach below the town, where the river makes a graceful curve, its rapid current subsiding quickly into tranquil repose. Here, in company with several others, we enjoyed a fine swimming bath in the soft and pure water, while farther down, the natives, men, women, and children, were indulging in a general paddle. The stream appeared to be filled with fish, some of which precisely resembled our speckled mountain trout, and were so tame as to approach and rub themselves against our persons; but all our attempts at hooking them with the line were unavailing. Returning thence, we came upon a fine and quiet extensive sugar plantation, where the cane, with as many as twelve and fifteen joints, was growing in the greatest luxuriance, and

without apparent cultivation. We also saw Indian corn, the stalk several feet in height. This is a great article of food with the natives, who pound it between two large smooth stones, and after a further process make *tortillas*, and corn-cake, or bread of it—both of which we found most agreeable to the taste. They also make a kind of cocoa cake of the cocoa nut, pounded and gently boiled with the juice of the sugar-cane. Emerging from this plantation, we visited the rude sugar-mill employed to crush the cane. It is of the simplest and most ancient construction; and the juice being allowed to ferment in large wooden vessels, forms an intoxicating drink much liked by the natives.

Some of our party also ascended the high conical mountain seen as we came up the river, and were much gratified with the wonderful vegetation and fine view. A learned doctor who accompanied us, being also naturalist, botanist, and geologist, lingered long amidst these fascinating scenes; and it was only when our fears for his safety became intensely painful, that he returned to us laden with botanical and geological specimens, and his bowie-knife reeking with the blood of an enormous and dangerous reptile which he had slain. Among his specimens was one of native lead of especial beauty and value, but which some of the Turks among us (for science has her opponents everywhere) basely insinuated was a stone rubbed by the kettle of an old camp-fire.

While here we witnessed an amusing and, to republicans, altogether a strange scene. The penal laws of New Granada are quite severe and summary ; and to ensure their certain application, great power is confided to Alcaldes and governors. Hearing a suffle and vociferous outcry, attended with the furious jabbering of the natives, we made a rush to the bar-room of the Alcalde, where both liquors and justice were dispensed at dear rates. There, surrounded by the odoriferous and greasy crowd, stood a gigantic Othello of a fellow, charging himself before the Alcalde with whipping a diminutive little Creole at his side, who was livid with rage, and vehemently entering a similar complaint against his own prowess in thrashing Othello. This difference of opinion as to who was vanquished was well-nigh coming to another fight, and the prospect for fun was believed by *the fancy* to be good. Meantime, above the top of the adjoining partition, and over the heads of Madame Alcalde and her daughters—the former to see that her lord demanded enough *pesos* of the culprits, and the young *senoritas* to laugh and jeer at all whose attention they could secure for that object. The terrible Alcalde now put glasses across his nose, and applying one containing *aguardiente* to his mouth, assumed pen, ink, and paper. Silence reigned throughout the court, disturbed only by the tittering of the women, scratching among the men, and loud yells of sundry naked little criers. The

Alcalde then writing down the names of the culprits, and the nature of their offence, sentenced the big Othello to pay a fine of six dollars, and be placed in the stocks four hours. The little Creole, who was first to bring the case before him, he let off with a sentence to treat the whole crowd. This at once accounted for the tight squeeze in the courtroom; and if none went ought *tight*, it was only because the Alcalde filled their glasses himself.

But the most extraordinary part of this performance was to come; for Othello paid down his fine in hard dollars, gulped his *aguardiente*, (the Alcalde considerably allowing him to fill his own glass,) and walking deliberately to the prison, placed his feet in the stocks himself, where the fumes of the large draught of *aguardiente* which he took good care to imbibe, enabled him to snooze away his four hours very comfortably. Thus the cunning Alcalde secured frequent appeals to the bar of Justice, by favouring the first complainant, while his bar of Bacchus flourished, and his popularity increased, by the sentence of a general treat. O, Momus, hold thy sides!

And yet we have seen similar leniency displayed to the complainant, before the magistrates of a certain city in the Great Republic, where *brotherly love* doth *rain*—alas, too often bricks!

While tarrying here, we visited one day the camp of the engineers engaged in the great and important task of the survey of the Isthmus; and by

the polite invitation of Captain Tilghman, who was then in command of the corps, we dined with them *en famille*. Their hospitality and kind attentions will ever be cherished by us with the liveliest satisfaction. The encampment was a very beautiful one, on a green plain, back of the town, near the skirt of the woods, and a fine spring of pure water.

The last night we tarried at Gorgona, a grand *fandango* came off, and hearing the merry beating of the drums, we joined the crowd. In front of one of the houses were seated two of the men, strumming a monotonous cadence on drums made of the cocoa-tree, half the size of a common pail, held between their knees, and another with the small Spanish guitar, which furnish the "universal music" on these occasions. The revellers form a ring, in the midst of which as many as choose enter into the dance. This consists generally of a lazy, low shuffle, until, excited by *aguardiente*, and emboldened as night progresses, the women dance furiously up to their favourites among the men, who are then obliged to follow suit, all joining in a kind of nasal squeal, or chaunt. There is nothing graceful in their mode of dancing, but, on the contrary, their motions are often indecent and disgusting.

On our way through the village to this scene, we came upon a smaller affair of the same description of amusement, which was going on in front of one of the liquor shops, and with proportionate noise and confusion. Here a little Creole, who, from the

restless flash of his coal-black eyes, might bear the cognomen of Diablo, was dancing with all his might and main. He was evidently bully among the men, and cock of the walk; and seeing us in his audience, came up and began to dance close to us, with a sort of challenging, swaggering air.—Watching him for a moment, and seeing that he was half intoxicated, and would soon give out if put to the test, one of our party commenced a regular hoe-down, knocking his shins with heavy boots when opportunity offered, by way of *tattoo*, thus provoking him and keeping him to his own game, till, at last, he became quite exhausted, and fairly broke down.* The yells of derision, the laughter and jeering of his companions, and his own chop-fallen aspect, were ludicrous in the extreme. “Bueno! Bueno! Senor Americano!” shouted his rivals, in great glee, in the midst of which we departed, having had our full share of the fun going on in that party. At a late hour we retired to our hammocks; and while listening to the distant drum and guitar, and watching the stars twinkling through the palmetto roof, fell asleep, to be aroused at daybreak by the same sounds, which the revolvers had thus kept up all night long, literally exemplifying the old song of, “We won’t go home till morning.”

Next day, having contracted to have our baggage forwarded by an American within a specified

* Good, good, Sir American.

time, and obtained one wretched little animal to ride, called a horse, we took our departure, two in company, for Panama and the Pacific.

CHAPTER V.

Isthmus in the Dry Season. Gorgona Road. Views from the Andes. Muleteers and Cargadores. Prospect of a Fight, and Comical Termination. Mountain Rills and Ravinos. Rancho and Camp on the Summit. Approach to Panama. Entrance by Starlight.

ONE mounted on a miserable palfrey, the size of a St. Bernard dog, and the delight of Sancho Panza, had he been there to see, and the other trudging along with double-barrel on shoulder, we took a narrow path across the table-land, and speedily struck into the thick forest at the base of the hills. Glad to be again in progress, and to escape from the hot sun even at this early hour, we welcomed the refreshing shade, and listened with increased delight to the thousand songsters of the groves. Not a drop of rain had fallen since the afternoon of our arrival off Chagres; and we found the climate, at this the *dry season*, pleasant and salubrious. With perfectly clear skies, the heat of the mid-day sun was not so oppressive as we anticipated, as a pleasant breeze sprang up every day, and the nights were cool and bracing. The *dry season proper*, is

from the first of December to the first of June; but February, March, and April are the only months when the traveller may confidently rely upon little or no rain; and, at this time only is the Cargona road traversable with any degree of comfort.

This we found to consist of a mere bridle-path, worn in the sandy clay soil or soft calcareous rocks by the feet of the horses and mules. The trees and underwood appear to have been originally cleared from a small space on both sides, through which the road winds among the mountains—enclosed by impervious woods—ascending and descending perpetually, and sometimes very abruptly and precipitously. For many miles the path is worn into deep holes, the mules stepping continually from one to another, which, in process of time, have formed many narrow ravines, often several feet in depth. When entering one of these, we frequently heard shouts of muleteers approaching the opposite way, and were obliged to wait till they passed—the way often being so narrow that we were forced to lay on the backs or necks of our horses.

Thus, amid solitude and shade, we pursued our onward way—now plunging into the deep and gloomy chasms of the mountains, and anon rising the opposite ascent, till the distant openings in the forest, gradually restoring the welcome sunlight, revealed also mountain and valley yet to be traversed.

Views, ever varying in beauty or magnificence, and partaking of all the forms of natural scenery, were presented on every side to our delighted gaze. Descending the steep declivities with slow and cautious steps, the light of day imperceptibly faded away till twilight grew apace; and the scream of the parrots, or twittering of birds, was exchanged for the low hum of insects or rustling of serpent, while the gurgling mountain rill fell like sweet music on the listening ear, or stole with silvery gleam and noiseless course, through the deep thickets, trellised with the wild flower and vine. Bathing awhile our weary limbs, and cooling our tired animals, we drank of the pure water, and again commenced our ascent to the realms of day, when, pausing upon the mountain side, we could see peak upon peak rising to view, and the valleys between clothed with interminable forest, with here and there the brown palmetto thatch of a native's hut. Echoing, too, from every ravine or abrupt turn in our pathway, came the shrill cries of the "vaquero," or hoarse shouts of the "cargodore," mingled occasionally with our emphatic national hurrah. This the natives soon acquired, reiterating our shouts with a "hoo-rah," which, though not quite the thing, seemed to afford them great glee.

Thus we met string after string of horses and mules, returning for fresh loads or cargo, tied each to the tail of the one in advance, the "vaquero" or muleteer riding behind all with a long gad in his

hand, his head covered with a broad-rimmed, parti-coloured, coarse straw "sombrero," which, with a pair of dirty pantaloons, and form naked to the waist, often completed his costume. These fellows were generally merry and contented enough—when alone, beguiling the way by some rude song; or, when accompanied by others, jabbering, shouting, and gesticulating perpetually. But the poor "cargodores" seemed to share a sterner fate; for at each quiet nook or fallen tree, would we see some of them resting with their weary burdens and panting for breath, while the perspiration streamed from every pore. During the dry season, the natives who follow the business are employed constantly in carrying baggage and freight on their backs. Lashing their burdens, which are commonly of about one hundred pounds weight, firmly to a kind of bamboo panier, with a band to the upper end to cross their forehead, and straps for their shoulders, they make the journey of twenty-four miles from Gorgona to Panama in two days, when not over-paid or over-worked; but since the great amount of travel across the Isthmus, they often consume several days.

After we had been some time on the road, one of these muleteers overtook us, and with many exclamations seemed to wish to deprive us of the horse. Thinking him rather too familiar we gave him such unmistakeable demonstrations of our disapproval, that he quickly *vamosed*, somewhat weaker in the

knees. We however recalled him, and gave him the receipt for the hire of the horse supposing he might perhaps be the owner, and this seemed to restore him to vitality, for he went off again at a round pace. Proceeding a few miles further the wretched brute deposited himself and rider—without ceremony—in the road, evidently resolved upon taking a *siesta*, but receiving a severe kicking instead, he finally concluded to continue his rambles.

But our adventures did not end here, for soon four of the natives laid their hands simultaneously upon bridle and saddle, shouting and vociferating most furiously. Incensed at what we believed to be a new claim upon the miserable beast, for the hire of which we had already paid a most exorbitant sum, and supposing that they intended to get possession of him, the butt of a pistol was rapidly descending upon the pate of the nearest intruder, when he sprang aside like a monkey, much to our regret. Again, however, they all returned to the charge, when our *dander* being up high, the muzzle of the pistol was “in less than no time” in close range with his legs. Fortunately at this moment we were joined by another party of travellers, one of whom was well acquainted with the Spanish and at once explained. It appeared that the straw mat underneath the saddle had slipped from its position, and the back of the poor beast was in consequence badly chafed, which had also caused him to lie

down, and the excited natives were only anxious to correct the difficulty.

Upon comprehending this, our anger and vexation vanished into a general outburst of laughter, and our four *hombres** capered about in the greatest glee crying, "ah mucha mala senor, mucha mala," to which we replied, "muy bueno" and "mucha gracia."† Replacing the saddle and receiving some medios for reward, they bid adieu to us amidst general mirth at the funny termination of the adventure: The one who had been in close proximity to the pistol, however, was transmuted by his fright from a dark darkey into a milky Creole.

Soon after this occurrence we met upon the road two straggling horses without saddle, bridle, or *vaquero*, and knowing by the brand that they belonged to the same individual who had imposed upon us already, we selected the best one and placing a rope around his nose for bridle, and strapping an overcoat on his back for saddle, pressed him into the service for the remainder of our road, and he proved quite an acquisition.

The sun was high in the heavens and the heat beginning to be felt even in these shades, when we reached the summit of the mountain range. Here we found another encampment of engineers, and hard by a *rancho* of a native. Resting a short time at the camp and partaking of a lunch of pilot bread

* Friends. † O very bad Spanish, very bad, sir.

‡ Very good and many thanks.

and water, we commenced the latter half of our journey, looking in vain ere we left the summit for any glimpse of either the Atlantic or Pacific. On every side the view was shut in by the confused range of mountain above mountain covered by ~~the~~ impervious woods. Thus we continued to jog on, riding and walking by turns, which we found a most excellent plan, occasionally making a detour into the woods on either hand. We saw great varieties of birds and insects, among the latter the large red and black ants with their hills several feet in height,* and another of our party, who crossed a few days after, shot an armadillo, his coat of mail not being proof to powder and ball.

Late in the afternoon we began to reach wider valleys and less precipitate paths, until we finally emerged upon a succession of savannahs or plains dotted here and there with groves of mango, or crossed at intervals by belts of cotton-wood trees and underwood. Among these we noticed the black thorn tree, and many others unknown to us; gnarled and beautiful vines mingled with their branches, and the wild cactus grew all around, forming a complete chaparral. Through this we wound our way, appreciating more completely by observation, the nature of the difficulties so perseveringly surmounted by our armies in Mexico.

* These ants often fight, and the red always conquer, carrying off their captives to work.

Leaving the Gorgona road, we now struck into the old paved road of the Spaniards, an old wooden cross and pile of stone by the wayside indicating either the grave of a robber, murderer, or suicide, or the junction of the two roads, as the imagination might determine.

We soon after crossed an old stone bridge over a beautiful little streamlet, and now began to distinguish among the distant groves the country houses of the citizens of Panama. Some of these were quite picturesque in the midst of large plantations, their foreground covered with flocks of goats or herds of fine cattle. Day was now rapidly declining, and the crimson rays of the setting sun on tree-top, valley and plain, betokened the early approach of night ere we could reach our destination. From each new eminence attained, we eagerly strained our vision to catch the first glimpse of the great Pacific; and our animals, more wearied than ourselves, permitted those of us on foot to keep the lead, now eagerly sought by all. At length we began to overtake the aguadores, or water-carriers, conveying to the town their last burdens for the day, and see the twinkling lights of the suburbs, rendered necessary by the closing shadows of night, which had settled over the town and country. These suburbs we found, upon entering, to be quite extensive, the houses at first being of no better class than those on the other side of the Isthmus; but as we advanced nearer the walls of

the town, we noticed houses of stone or frame, two or three stories in height.

Pausing at a little shop without the gates, we refreshed ourselves with some very sweet oranges, biscuit and Madeira wine, after which, joining the current of stragglers, we reached the wide, paved street with a low wall on each side, leading to the Gorgona gate, or Puerte de Tierra. The moon had not risen, but the stars brightly shining, revealed the high, arched gateway, surmounted with tower and bell, and rude stone cross, with the massive old walls, and deep fosse extending on each side, encircling the whole town in their complete, but now useless embrace. Within then we could trace the confused mass of tiled roofs and crumbling ruins, with the towers of the great cathedral rising in the midst, while beyond all, and beheld for the first time, were the glittering waters of the Pacific, and Bay of Panama, with the bold islands rearing their verdant crests like mountains in the sea. Welcome, thrice welcome now, to us was the far-famed Panama, and right glad were we to find ourselves in comfortable lodgings with a bare cot on which to rest our weary limbs, after ten hours of journeying in the Andes of the Isthmus.

CHAPTER VI.

Panama. Celebration of Washington's Birth day. The Military and Governor's Band. Church of the Virgin. Streets of La Muerced and San Juan de Dios. Shops, Cafes, and Fondas. Interior of the Houses. Plaza. Grand Cathedral. Church of Santa Anna. Priests. Observance of the Sabbath. Midnight Procession of the Host. Representation of Christ bearing the Cross.

THIS is a regular old Spanish town, containing from six to eight thousand inhabitants, at least one half residing outside the walls. We arrived here on the 21st of February, and were aroused from our slumbers at an early hour of the following morning by the firing of guns and pistols, and clangour of drums and trumpets, mingled with shouts, cheers and hurrahs.

Hastening out on the balcony to ascertain the cause, a strange, picturesque and animated scene presented itself. Below us in every direction appeared in close proximity the red, glazed, tiled roofs of the city, the houses of stone or brick, two and three stories in height, covered with a coat of plaster or whitewashed, and invariably surrounded on each story with a wide balcony floored with the large, flat, square brick, and protected from sun and rain, by the roofs of the houses extending over them.

Intersecting them at right angles, the straight and narrow streets were filled with natives selling fruit, or lazily strolling towards the scene of uproar. Away in the distance, beneath the bright morning sun, shone the clear, still surface of the bay, reflecting in dark contrast the shadows of its bold mountain isles, while the air was filled with thousands of buzzards on noiseless and almost motionless wing, or twittering martins restlessly flitting from ruined tower and wall.

In a few moments we heard the inspiring strains of "Hail Columbia" from a full military band, echoed from the rude pavement by the steady tramp of men; and the waving of the Star Spangled Banner, as the column passed the head of the street, assured us that our patriotic countrymen were appropriately celebrating the birthday of Washington. We had arrived too late on the previous evening to participate in the arrangements, and our fatigue had induced sleep till the morning was well advanced. The procession numbered three or four hundred Americans, and preceded by the Governor's band in full uniform, marched to his quarters, and to the houses of the American and French Consuls, giving all in town three cheers; after which our flag was unfurled, and saluted at the battery fronting the bay, and the festivities of the day were concluded by a dinner and grand concert at the American Hotel, in the evening.

The soldiers here are a queer-looking specimen of

the nucleus of an army. There are about seventy, or at most a hundred, their uniform consisting of coarse, dirty, white linen pants, a shirt of the same, made *a la blouse*, and worn outside; a blue cloth scull-cap, with a red band in front, contrasting, *a la diable*, with their black faces; and bare feet with long toes complete the *tout ensemble*.

Shouldering their clumsy, condemned English muskets and bayonets—the latter suitable for a toad-striker, they parade morning and evening in their barrack-yard, going through their evolutions with tolerable correctness, but still forcibly reminding one of Jack Falstaff and his buckram warriors. These soldiers are employed as guards to the immense amounts of specie and bullion sent across the Isthmus, and in various similar duties within the town.

After witnessing the celebration and parade of the morning, and partaking of our *café*, we sallied forth to explore this ancient town and port.

Entering by the principal or Gorgona gate from the north-west, the traveller is struck both by the solidity and substantial character of the buildings, and the evidences of disuse or dilapidation everywhere presented. Immediately within the walls, and fronting the gateway, is the Church of the Blessed Virgin, extending to the next street, with the ruins of a monastery or convent attached. The church itself is in tolerable repair; its yellow, stuccoed front adorned with antique-looking towers, and

niches filled with images of saints. The principal entrance is at the side, from the street of La Muerced, and at the corner fronting the gateway, is an open porch or shrine, with an altar and a picture of the Virgin Mary, and a jewelled cross enclosed in glass. Here the tired cargadores, vaqueros, and agnadores are accustomed to offer their devotions; and after a brief rest upon their weary limbs, resume their incessant labours. None ever pass here without lifting their sombreros, or crossing themselves.

Commencing here, the Calle de la Muerced, or street of mercy, or the Virgin, extends directly through the plaza to the gate opening upon the shores of the bay—a distance of about a quarter of a mile; in width, twenty-five to thirty feet, with an old cobble pavement and narrow flag-stone sidewalks, much worn and broken, or covered with grease enough to afford good sliding. This, the principal street of Panama, is quite similar to all the others. Parallel, and next to it, is the street of San Juan de Dios, not so wide, but much neater in appearance, and attracting the notice of the stranger with its numerous and varied stores and shops.

With the exception of two or three warehouses of the more considerable merchants, who are chiefly located near the custom-house and mole, these shops are small, but filled with the greatest variety of wares, dry goods, hardware, and clothing, which is made by the industrious fingers of the senoras and

senoritas who invariably attend the counters. Some of them, who are Creoles, bordering on the pure Castilian, have pretensions to beauty, but generally the dusky or sallow complexion quite neutralizes the effect of their jet-black hair and eyes. Besides these shops, every street has its wine stores and fruit stalls, the former lined with fancifully painted shelves, and filled from floor to ceiling with, glasses and chinaware, and bottles of wines, cordial, cogniac, or aguardiente. The strong drink is consumed chiefly by the labouring people; but all classes drink much of the light cordials and claret wines. Rows of dusty and empty bottles, however, and shelves long bereft of merchandise, evidence the poverty or want of industry of many.

On the street of la Muerced, under the quarters of the French Consul, is the French *café*, and nigh to this the California and United States restaurants—the two latter established since the influx of American travel by this route. At all of them we obtained tolerable good meals. The French chocolate, prepared here from the nut, and the Sandwich-Island coffee, were particularly fine. The only hotels were the Fonda Americana, Washington House, and Hotel Française—the first and last tolerably well-kept, considering all things; the other only a lodging-house. After tarrying a week at the former, we became tired of life at a hotel, and soon sought and obtained lodgings and a

cook, at a respectable private house, becoming our own caterers.

We were so fortunate as to be received into the mansion of Senor Antonio Forus, a merchant of Havana, and of an ancient, wealthy, and highly-respectable Spanish family of Old Panama. To this gentleman's politeness and kind attentions, combined with his perfect knowledge of our language, were we especially indebted for many comforts and advantages while under his roof; and would advise our countrymen who are provided with proper credentials, to seek admission to his quarters, over the Jardin Italiano, in the street of la Muerced.

The interior of the houses here are admirably adapted for comfort in this climate. They are mostly thirty to forty feet square, and often larger—the walls two or three feet thick, and provided with ornamental loopholes to admit the external air—the floors of the upper stories composed of slabs of the bay-tree, or paved with brick laid on rafters of this tree, which is very strong and lasting. These stories are used as the residence of the family; and divided into large apartments, the partitions not reaching to the ceiling or roof, permit free ventilation, which is further aided by wide stairways and folding-doors, with windows cut in them opening on the balconies. Thus, with the impervious tiled roof as much comfort is ensured as is possible in a tropical climate. The ground-floor is occupied by a shop of some kind, and a wide, stone-paved hall, from

whence the ample stone or mahogany staircase ascends to the family apartments. A wide courtyard, provided with well or cistern, and some few large trees, completes the description of a Panama house.

The plaza, or open common, (for it is neither more nor less,) is worthy of notice only as a distinctive feature in a Spanish town, and is not to be named in comparison with any of the public squares of our large cities. Covered with sparse grass, it is a general play-ground for the children, who, instead of jeering and annoying poor cripples, or other pitiable objects of humanity, as in our own free country, are contented with the antics of a favourite dog, or to war with a belligerent goat.

Fronting on the plaza, is a seminary of learning, the old legislative hall, with its long row of short stone pillars and New Grenadian coat of arms, and the great Cathedral.

The latter is an interesting relic of Panama in its palmy days; and though stripped by the old Spaniards of its principal paintings, jewels, and ornaments, in 1823, (the time of the revolution and triumph of Bolivar,) enough of the original structure yet remains to convey an idea of the superior energy of its founders. It is apparently one hundred and fifty feet in length, by fifty in breadth. The façade, though marred by the ravages of time, is venerable on that account, and quite imposing. Two massive square towers rear their solid struc-

tures from the foundation walls, terminating with conical spires, which are coated with stucco and spangled with large pearl shells, affording a most beautiful effect, in the bright rays of the sun or mellow light of the moon. Surmounted each by a cross, and provided with a good clock, and chime of bells from cracked to musical, these towers are worthy objects of pride to all devout and good citizens. Between them, and over the great entrance, are figures in stone of Christ and the twelve apostles, rather the worse for wear from the floods of the rainy season, in spite of the niches provided for them. Below these are the three great doorways, the centre one being arched and highly ornamented, and all approached by a grand double flight of stone steps. There is, also, a wide doorway and similar ascent on the side, from the street of la Muerced.

The architecture of the interior is, however, more effective. The central nave is apparently eighty feet high, with an open mahogany roof, and on each side a double row of thirty-two immense quadrangular columns, with arches between. The high altar is quite a fine affair, with saints innumerable, and over the crucifix a large silver stork presides with her young. There are also other altars and shrines to various saints, with pictures of the Crucifixion, Last Supper, Madonna, &c. Over one of these we saw what we supposed to be the figure of an Indian clinging to a tree, with an

arrow transfixed through the heart, and one through each arm. Still above this appeared a figure like St. George standing over the dragon, with helmet, sword, and shield, but no steed. This we imagined to be "good ould Saint Pathrick" killing the father of serpents, and the other some canonized Indian deity. If wrong in these surmises, we trust the good and indulgent *padres* will attribute it to the ignorance of depraved heretics, which, so far as their system is concerned, we acknowledge ourselves to be.

Near the altar the pavement is covered with tombstones of *padres* and great folks. One, to the memory of a pious *senora*, we observed, was embellished with the figures of an angel opening the gate of heaven and a lady weeping at the tomb; and another was of beautiful Parian marble, in the form of the cross, with an inscription. By the side of the principal entrance were also the usual white marble fonts of holy water, resorted to by all the faithful, and filled with the little insects dropped from the dirty sleeves of devotees. Two or three small and inferior organs supplied the music.

Outside the walls of the town and near the Gorgona gate is also the Church of Santa Anna. It is even larger than the Cathedral, and though of its great towers one only remains perfect, its appearance is quite grand and beautiful, especially when seen in bold relief against the evening sky, its grey walls and lonely tower gorgeous in the crimson

light of the setting sun, while the deep notes of the vesper bell are returned in plaintive echo from the neighbouring hill.

There are many other inferior churches both within and without the walls, so that as usual in Roman Catholic countries the church bells are perpetually tolling, ringing, or clanging; chiefly the latter, however, in Panama, as they are mostly rung by being pounded with a cobble stone and are thus often cracked. This abundance of churches also affords food and idleness to *padres* and priests innumerable, so that a large body of men are interested in extending the system as far as possible, and in the multiplication of ceremonies and observances.

The same plan is pursued among the Protestants as well as Roman Catholics in our own land, where church edifices are built with money borrowed or begged. Debts are thus bequeathed to posterity, and the continual appeal from such sources for aid might put O'Connell to the blush.

The Sabbath is observed in Panama as in all Spanish cities. After attending early or morning mass, all classes turn out for amusements. The military and Governor's band parade twice, the shops and billiard rooms are open, and it is the great day allowed by law for cock-fighting. We attended church service at the residence of the American consul, following the dictates of conscience or of home custom, as the case might be, which is

exactly what most of the world do. Every Sunday morning, at two or three o'clock, the host is carried in procession through the streets. It was a strange sight to us, to behold the crucifix hung not only with the image of Christ but with cords and elegant tapestry ; was it so on Calvary ? Carried by priests in white robes, and followed by a band of musicians and many more priests all in white, chaunting in full chorus and unearthly tones, the ghostly train swept by. From every door and window issued half-clad devotees to kneel and repeat their prayers in moonlight or shadow, while over all the impressive scene "the heavens declare the glory of God," and the eternal stars shed their bright lustre both "on the just and the unjust."

Processions are also frequent here on the days of the week. One evening we joined a crowd of our countrymen, and followed a procession bearing on a platform carried by four natives, a figure of Christ as large as life, dressed in a robe of purple velvet and crowned with thorns, bending under the weight of a large wooden cross. Tin lanterns, with six or eight tallow candles were stuck around it, and the top of the cross was adorned with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. There were few priests, but crowds of women and children followed close. As they neared the Cathedral door they all halted and gathered around, kneeling devoutly, while the priest with knees on the bare pavement selecting a *clean place*, repeated his prayers and invocations. Meantime

we observed the fellows who carried the show had a talk and flirtation with the wenches nearest them. Resuming the march, we took off our hats and entered the Cathedral with them. Here they repeated the litany in a mixture of bad Latin and corrupt Spanish, the women and children, (the wicked men are too often absent on such occasions) kneeling on the pavement of the church, joined with much fervor in the responses, elevating and extending their arms and outstretched hands towards the image. To their ignorant hearts it was true devotion, and side by side the rich and poor kneeled together, prevented neither by glittering robe nor tattered rag, by costly pew nor haughty pride; for "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," was not forgotten here.

CHAPTER VII.

Beautiful Ruins. Church of San Domingo and San Felipe. College of Jesuits. Old Monasteries and Nunnery. Convent of the Conception. Battery and Barracks. Arsenal and Hospital. Cockpit and Circus. Oriental Bath. The Sea Shore. Rapid Rise of the Tide. Shells. Soldier Crabs. Eclipse of the Moon. Serenade.

PANAMA abounds with ruins of the most diversified and beautiful description. The most perfect of these is the Church of San Domingo. Situated on one of the inferior streets near the bay, it frequently escapes the notice of strangers. Entering by a small opening, left in the wooden enclosure of the great doorway, we were at once in the body of the church. The walls appear almost entire, the mortar being hard as the stone itself, but no vestige of tower or roof remains. The arches are quite unbroken and perfect, stretching from side to side in bold and massive beauty. One of them especially attracted our admiration, being nearly level at the key-stone, and showing the intimate knowledge of its constructors with the principles of their art. At the east end were the remains of chancel, altar, and vestry, and the whole interior is filled with beautiful trees and shrubbery, with every variety of creeping vine, climbing gracefully over arch and

pillar, and mouldering wall. Near the west end hangs three antique looking old bells on rude cross timbers. These are of a different size, and of various and most delicious tones. They bear dates 1761, and the inscription "Francisco de Leon, N. del Rosario ora pro nobis." Passing through a door opposite to the one we entered by, we found ourselves in a quadrangular court overgrown with trees, and surrounded on three sides by the remains of a large monastery or nunnery. The inner walls remain, as also the pedestals of the columns in front of them. Adjoining the ruined church is a private stone staircase, leading to a small, square door in the wall of the convent, which perhaps could many a tale unfold. Strewed about the court were earthen vessels shaped like those in Eastern countries, and we obtained from one of them letters stamped in a circle, resembling the Arabic or Moorish characters.

On our return here we found a beautiful little chapel of the convent still preserved and in use, called San Felipe, and adorned with massive silver-framed oil paintings of the Madonna and the Crucifixion, and large chandeliers also of solid silver.

We also visited the ruins of the College of Jesuits which cover a large extent. There was no perceptible mode of admission, but clambering to the top of the wall where it is lowest, we found the

interior filled with trees and vines, and obtained some of the bolts of a wild cotton plant. Cocoa-trees and the palmetto were also displaying their graceful tops above the walls. This building it is said was never completed.

Standing immediately on the shores of the bay, are the remains of two old monasteries of immense size. Of these the walls and old bells only remain, but close at hand are the ruins of an old Spanish convent covering a whole square. A portion of the roof and the towers are yet to be seen with the old bells swinging sentinels over all, where once their matin tones aroused the young and the beautiful to prayer, now voiceless and hushed as they. Near this is the Convent of the Conception, where a few nuns yet reside. We visited it afterwards in company with an American lady, but were only admitted to the outer court. By the aid of a wooden wheel revolving horizontally, they supplied us with tumblers of pure and sparkling water, and a bouquet of most rare, beautiful, and fragrant flowers. They refused any remuneration for their kindness, but seemed much delighted with the beauty of our fair companion, promising to admit her on the following day.

“ But I won't be a nun, no I sha'n't be a nun,
I'm so fond of pleasure that I can not be a nun.”

Seeing only the flash of their brilliant black eyes through a knot hole in the wheel, we imagined

ourselves transferred to the famous Alhambra, and were fain to enter there, but imitating the example of irresistible Mother Eve, our "fair ladye" drove us out of Paradise.

A favourite walk with strangers while tarrying in Panama, is on the East Battery fronting the bay. Stretching away to the south-east, some four hundred yards in length, forty feet in width, and fifty feet above high-water mark, it presents a frowning battlement of solid masonry, in which are still remaining some fine old brass cannon of large calibre, bearing the arms of Hispaniola, and dated Seville, 1745 and 1777, also a brass mortar inscribed "Barcelona, Philip V." By the ruined watch-tower on the wall, these relics of the olden time look out upon the sea, and like the once-powerful nation whose arms they bear, behold the tide of commerce and civilization sweeping onward, bestowing wealth, power, and refinement on a nation, whose infancy was scarce inscribed in history, ere its republican fires destroyed the last remnant of monarchical tyranny on both continents of the New World.

The view of the bay and town from this battery is remarkably fine. The gorgeous sunset of the tropics, crowning the distant mountains with a blaze of glory, and covering the green islands with a robe of crimson and orange; or after a brief interval, the grey light of the twinkling stars and bright effulgence of the rising moon, reflected from the

gleaming waters at our feet, or falling with mellow light on spire, roof, and balcony, afford a scene which the heart of an artist might well delight in, but which his pencil can ne'er portray.

The barracks of the military and their parade immediately in rear of this battery, are always provided with groups of lounging, lazy, and dirty soldiers.

Visiting the arsenal and military hospital on the street of San Juan de Dios, we were encountered at the door by these rascals, with rusty muskets, crying "cigaros, cigaros, senores," a few of which we bestowed, to their great delight. Ascending the tickety stairs from a musty old courtyard, we were admitted by another sentry with a similar password into a large apartment, on a platform of which, in the centre, was a score or more of soldiers of all colours, from jet black, up to saffron, yellow, or white livered. They were employed in weaving straw hats which they eagerly offered us for sale. Those denominated Panama hats by us are here called Guayaquil, and are made at Monte Christo, San Juan, and San Helano on that coast. We found these military hatters hard at a bargain, and were proceeding to the further end of the room in quest of more liberal dealers, when they tried to stop us, crying "mucho in infirmo, mucho infirmo, senior." Taking this to be a mere ruse, we persevered, and there found sure enough, several poor fellows yellow with Panama fever. We therefore

beat a retreat, and as a day after we saw these soldiers bearing a rude wooden coffin out of the Gorgona gate, wondered which of these whilom warriors had received his final discharge from the ranks of the living.

While musing over one of these scenes, we noticed a crowd of natives wending their way up a sort of causeway just within the walls, towards a small building half in ruins. As several of them carried their feathered champions under their arms, we knew directly that cockfighting was the order of the day; and accordingly we joined the rush. The interior is rudely fitted with seats against the old walls rising in the form of an amphitheatre, a circular space of hard beaten ground being left for the sport. The preliminary scenes here are of the most ludicrous description. A crowd of *the fancy* darbies and Crooles shuffling and pushing about the ring, chattering like monkeys and gesticulating like ourang-outangs, discuss with the utmost rage and violence the merits of the different birds. Others are engaged in fixing on the murderous steel gaffs, while betting and hedging run high. At one side hangs a rusty old bell, which is used as a signal to clear the ring. After a long delay in completing the final arrangements, during which the woolly tribe often get into a fight in place of the feathered; the bell is struck impatiently, the enraged birds are placed opposite to each other, held by the several owners, while the one which is intended by the

gambling knaves to win, has most of his tail feathers plucked violently out. Then comes a furious onset, the birds frequently leaping clear over one another, but in a few seconds blood spurts forth from second joint or neck, and the wounded hero falls. Screams, yells, and shouts of derision now burst forth ; but in a moment all is still, for the floored combatant suddenly rises, and quick as lightning lays low his antagonist. When this happens, the excitement of the crowd becomes furious, and they watch with the greatest eagerness for the last gasp of either bird, the survivor being immediately declared the winner. But it more commonly happens that one or other of them is killed at the first onset. Now comes the payment of losses, and preparation for another bout. This amusement appeared to us cruel, disgusting, and puerile, but it is nevertheless the grand entertainment among these people. They also had at the time of our visit a circus company, which performed on Sunday evenings, within the ruins of a fine old church adjoining the College of Jesuits. It was much frequented but we did not go there.

Wandering one beautiful Sunday morning towards a favourite haunt amidst the lonely yet eloquent ruins, our attention was drawn to the attractive word *baths*, on a sign above an old gateway. Entering immediately, we found ourselves in a large court yard, in which were three or four bamboo huts or rather booths. Ushered into one

of these, a coarse towel, comb and soap were handed, and the curtain dropped. Within were three high oriental shaped jars, containing each a half-barrel or more of water clear as crystal, and provided with wooden cover and calabash, the latter to be used in place of a shower bath. There was a rough brick floor to stand upon with bare feet, and on one side a rough bench to receive clothing. Not relishing the rough floor, we succeeded in standing upright within the jar, though the bottom was so small as only to permit one foot to rest on the other. The soap used is made partly with a plant or root similar to that of California; and either its properties are extraordinary, or we have lost our power of comparison between ourselves and the dusky natures around us. While engaged in these delightful ablutions, we cast frequent glances through the bamboo sides of our modest retreat, fearing some young Senorita might linger in the grove to lave in turn her own fair form or rather twilight skin. But in this, alas, we were not so fortunate as our friend and "compagnion" the gallant captain, whose successful amours from the Turkish veil of Algiers to the irresistible mantilla of Mexico, gave him all the prestige of victory. This oriental style of bathing was afterward much resorted to, and the attentive *hombre*, the proprietor, no doubt, collected many rials.

On the sea shore was a favourite walk in the cool of the morning and evening, but we did not

often venture to bathe, as in these latitudes sharks are both numerous and daring. The tide which rises and falls the extraordinary height of twenty-two feet, presented an imposing sight, when the flood making with a stiff breeze, the great combers came roaring and foaming up the beach with wonderful rapidity. The shore directly in front of the city is flat but composed of hard volcanic rock, while on the other side it is yellow or black sand beach. The tide when at full flood in stormy weather dashes against the high wall of the last battery with great violence, throwing the spray far above it. In our strolls along the sandy beach, we gathered many small shells of great variety, and some quite beautiful. The best time for this amusement was on a rising tide, when intent on securing some attractive shell, we often got caught by the waves, and had a grand scramble to reach dry land.

We observed similar performances too by the little land crabs, called soldier crabs, which abound on the shore, living in holes, feeding on the animalculæ of the tide. Some of these were quite large, and of a bright red colour, from which, with their belligerent attitude when approached, they, no doubt, derive their name. The sand is marked all over with their claws, and when overtaken by the tide on the smooth rocks, they hold on with these until the waves recedes, when they scramble off as nimbly as possible.

Resting on the cool balcony after one of these

rambles, we watched the evening shadows falling fast from tower and isle over city and bay, while busy memory was far away by the side of our own loved hearthstones in a wintry clime, when our attention was recalled by the sombre gloom settling gradually and strangely on surrounding objects.—Remembering at once the expected eclipse of the moon, we hurried forth to observe its effects among the ruins. Amidst the falling shadows of broken and crumbling arch, the dim forms of tall and venerable trees seemed like the ghosts of old padre and stalwart knight, returned to gaze once more on the well-known scenes of a past century, their strong arms held aloft in deprecatory amazement, while the low night wind sighed the requiem of the olden time. Huge vines crept away over the dark and dismal walls, like the serpent of old deserting the desolation of the once bright abode. Silence, disturbed only by the rustling leaf or flitting bat, reigned supreme, where once the vaulted roof or marble floor echoed with the sound of mailed foot or pealing organ. Altogether the scene was one not soon to be forgotten; and retiring to repose for the night, we were only aroused for a moment from our dreams by a serenade of the most delicious music under the balcony, when pleasant thoughts of our far off homes rose up to blend with returning slumber.

CHAPTER VIII.

Scenes and Incidents. The American Press. Arrival of American Ladies. A Panama Swell. Costume of the Women. Panama Chains and Pearls. Ancient Bracelets. Loss and Recovery of Baggage. Game. Rows with the Natives. Chain Gangs. Paganini and his Band. Lessons in Spanish. Markets. Yams. Delicious Shell Fish. Agua Marba. Roast Monkey. Private Lodgings and Mode of Living.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many objects of interest in and about Panama, our delay there when en route for the El Dorado would have grown somewhat tedious, but for the new and agreeable scenes and incidents continually presenting themselves.

Imitating the enterprising example of our countrymen in Mexico, a small weekly newspaper called the Panama Star was early established to furnish information or amusement to our people sojourning here, as well as to those at home. This, we believe, was the first effort of the American press on the continent, but so great is the anxiety of the people of New Granada to cultivate friendly relations with us, and acquire our language, that we hope an American newspaper will in due time be permanently published among them.

Of all American novelties, however, presented to the New Grenadians, none seemed to afford

them more surprise and gratification than the arrival of some of our fair countrywomen. We had the pleasure of seeing two of these persevering and heroic ladies enter the Gorgona gate in health and safety, one of them mounted on a fine mule, holding her little boy before her, the other carried in a hammock *a la palanquin*. We received them with three hearty cheers, which they gracefully acknowledged. How little will the hardship and fatigue which they endured be appreciated by those who in a few years will be whirled across the Isthmus by railway in two or three hours.

Standing in the crowd of natives and Americans, we observed a tip top dandy, or regular Panama swell. He was dressed with loose gay linen pants, yellow leather, or buckskin zapatos, or shoes, Monte Cristo sombrero, and a curious-looking linen coat called a "Brusa," known among us under the soubriquet of "Bruiser." It is something between a shirt or a blouse, usually made of plaid linen, with ample sleeves, wristbands, and collar like a shirt, having a wide band across the shoulders to which the full skirt is gathered, and open in front with pockets in each corner. Exceedingly comfortable in a hot climate, it is nevertheless very comical in appearance.

The costume of the women of Panama especially attracted our attention. Although appropriate enough to the climate, it was rather different from our preconceived ideas of modesty and propriety.

A white petticoat, or with the better classes, a black silk one, descends from the short waist; above this a loose chemise ascends unwillingly, or rather, hangs provokingly from the short-sleeved shoulder. Cut very low in the back, it is usually surrounded with common fringe, or sometimes rich, deep lace; this, with slipper down at heel, or neat, black morocco shoe and white stockings completes the in-door attire. When dressed for mass or circus the hair is neatly plaited and set off with pearls or rude golden ornaments: and the indispensable white lace mantilla, or *nelso*, hangs gracefully from the back of the head, or is allowed to drop carelessly from the shoulder. This dress being universal we soon grew accustomed to it. The style of dress among our fashionable belles, we fear cannot plead adaptation to the climate like that of Panama. What would the modestly-attired daughters of the Celestial Empire say to the beautiful barbarians of America. The well-worn motto of "honi soit qui mal y pense" we fear is too much relied on in these latter days.

Among the most conspicuous of the ornaments sometimes worn by the ladies of New Granada, are the celebrated Panama chains. Of the purest gold, obtained in the country, and called *Choco* gold, these chains are made with combined delicacy and strength, frosted and coloured with a peculiar yellow tinge, different from any other species of jewelry, and much admired. They are also adorned with a

pendant of several large and beautiful pearls set in gold. These pearls are found in great abundance, and of large size, off the shores of the numerous islands in the bay of Panama, but the finest ones are obtained from the Isle del Rey, some thirty or forty miles out. Some are very perfect and of an egg or pear shape, and are often brought to the city by the poor divers who obtain them, and sold for a mere song. Many small and imperfect ones, or others partially cut from the shells in fanciful shapes, were disposed of for a few rials each. Cornelians and agates are also found here and obtained very cheap of the different jewellers, whose shops by the way appear more like tinker's shops and their instruments of labour are of the rudest description. Among other curiosities which we saw, our polite host showed us a most curious pair of antique bracelets made doubtless in Old Spain, more than three hundred years ago. He told us they had been in his family since the settlement of old Panama. They were of a rude net work, and weighed half a pound each of pure gold. We concluded it would neither be advisable nor safe, to allow one of our American ladies to box our ears with such a bracelet upon her wrist, as none but a steel clad knight could withstand her.

Among the most important, but not always agreeable of our occupations while in Panama, was mounting watch at the Gorgona gate, or Hotel Francaise, for the arrival of our different articles of

baggage.. Many ludicrous scenes, however, rewarded our patience, as the moment any poor cargodore or staggering mule made his appearance within the gate, there was a general rush to examine or claim the various packages. This would often bring a poor lean little horse upon his knees, or induce a cargodore after a violent jabbering to consider his pilgrimage over and allow his heavy load to be deposited with the owner.

One of our party, like many others, had been anxiously watching nearly a week for a leather bag which contained numerous articles and papers of importance to him. To expedite its transmission and insure its safety also, he had employed a fellow at Gorgona named Manuel Gomez. Paying him an extra price, and taking his receipt, he beheld him start for Panama, trotting off cheerily ahead of his mule. But, lo! this was the last of Master Manuel for many a day. Inquiring of every newly arrived cargodore or muleteer, all knew Manuel Gomez; "*Si si, Senor, maniana,*" meaning that he would arrive to-morrow, but though to-morrow surely came no Manuel came with it. Thus mounting guard on the city walls one day "in quest of adventures," who should we espy in the midst of a crowd, but the identical Manuel Gomez himself; but unfortunately for him he was not at that moment in *propria persona*, being a Bacchante or in vulgar parlance gloriously drunk. Mingling at once in the circle of his admirers, the blackamoor's

conscience at sight of us, did causè his vagabond senses to return to the aid of his own trembling limbs. With the dread of the police before his eyes he begged for mercy, and explained that having confided the bag to another *hombre*, who was out at the old stone bridge, he could not rocover it from him without more *rials*, of which himself was minus. A true and ready friend from the land of the claymore and kilt, volunteered to accompany the slippery Manuel and obtain the property or thrash the rogue, on behalf of the owner who was suffering with severe indisposition. Arriving at the bridge, sure enough, there was the darkey, bag, and all. Paying him the four rials demanded, the rascally Manuel made a grab at the funds, and obtaining both held on to the bag. Whereupon auld reekie tappit them on their crowns, producing immediate resignation. Now Master Manuel offered to carry the bag to the hotel in the town for *dos riales*, which was accordingly promised him, but when the "shrewd operator" arrived at his final destination, he had the audacity to demand twelve rials more, which the party interested immediately settled by whacking the scamp from top to bottom of the stairs. * Thus vanished the redoubtable Manuel pale as a ghost to the land of *spirits*, where no doubt he quickly forgot the world and its troubles. Similar rows with the natives were not unusual, when their pockets were well filled with

rials of the Americans, and their heads proportionately stored with aguardiente.

We saw another instance of this kind one day in the street of La Muerced. One of our people, who had been on a hunting and shooting expedition, in quest of the small red deer, which are numerous, or of the wild pigeons which abound in the neighbouring mountains, being unsuccessful in obtaining the former, had purchased a young fawn of a native who killed it, and employed him to carry it to his lodgings. Some one, however, offered the fellow a higher price than he obtained, whereat he at once claimed the game as his own property, and throwing it down in the street, refused to proceed farther. Our Yankee friend drew his bowie-knife to intimidate him ; but he was too cunning for that, and retorted by handling his own knife, whereat the American quickly replaced his in his belt, and then deliberately knocked our belligerent *hombre* down, aiding his rapid rise by a kick. This *argumentum ad hominem* he perfectly understood, and nimbly picking up the game trotted off in the required direction.

The natives, however, are generally honest, as the smallest thefts are punished with long imprisonment ; and although some trunks were lost or rifled on the Isthmus, yet, among the vast number transported in safety, this was not surprising, especially considering also the carelessness of the owners.

Other, and higher crimes, are of rare occurrence, and are punished by placing the criminals in chain gangs. We saw some forty or fifty of these in all, going about the streets, carrying garbage and mending pavement. They are linked two and two by the leg and ankle, with strong iron chains, which are not very heavy. They are always accompanied by sentinels to make them work and preclude escape: their arms and hands are free, and they appeared to walk without great difficulty. At first the continual clank, clank, of their chains, conveyed unpleasant feelings; but when we compare their easy existence in the free air of heaven and in sight of their families, it is far less painful than the solitary confinement of our penitentiaries. The ignominy, no doubt, constitutes the chief punishment; for we never saw any of the natives notice or speak to them.

While we were at the Fonda Americano, a band of nine musicians played one, and sometimes two evenings each week, using the large square hall for their Concert Room, which, by the liberality of the landlord, was free to all.

They performed opera music, overtures, polkas, waltzes, marches, &c., of the best modern composers, and all in the most perfect style. They were mostly Negroes and two or three Creoles.

Their leader, a Negro, with woolly moustache, they called Paganini: and he was, in truth, one of

the best violinists we ever heard. One of them played a common, single-keyed German flute, like Kyle. They always played at the beginning and close of their performances, our national airs, "Hail Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle," which were enthusiastically cheered with the regular American hurrah. As an evidence of our high appreciation of their skill, we employed them one lovely evening to serenade the Governor, our consul Mr. Nelson, and the American ladies in town.

Passing, in one of our walks, a large house which had apparently been the residence in palmyer days of an old Spanish grandee, we heard a loud buzz of voices, and looking in beheld row after row of small and mischievous-looking boys busily engaged at their studies and tricks. The sight was a pleasant one, as well as comical, and had the good effect to induce us forthwith to obtain a Spanish primer, and commence the study of the language. This we found to be the best mode to obtain a perfect idea of the pronunciation, and, of course, of the orthography; and brief as was our schooling, we were impressed with the opinion, that the best way to acquire any foreign language, is to learn it as we learn our own—from the alphabet and the primer—and not by plunging at once into the grammar, though we are also quite ready to confess our general imperfect knowledge of the latter.

Early one morning we wended our way to the market, which is situated immediately upon the

mole. Here we found a noisy, jabbering, and dirty crowd of black women, and Creoles of both sexes—the former not so remarkable for their rotundity as those of our more favoured land. They had the usual immense variety of tropical fruits, especially bananas, mangoes, tamarinds, and yams; the latter is a very fine vegetable, and is the potato of this climate, though, in our opinion, quite superior to that watery and common esculent. The yam seems to be almost pure farina, and, served up in the style of American cookery, would be a universal favourite, making, with the addition of a little flour, the finest bread. We saw, also, a great variety of fish, some very fine; and a species of salmon, weighing fifteen pounds, we had on our table. They showed us some very large oysters, which, when cooked, tasted and looked more like our long clams; and we obtained some of a species of minute and beautiful shell-fish, not larger than one's finger-nail, which were very delicious.

The countrywomen gather a species of herb, which they dry and prepare a tea from, which they call "*agua marba*," very agreeable to the taste, and quite a good substitute for our Chinese beverage.

Much to our horror and surprise, we found, too, that the natives eat monkeys, and are very fond of them. A roast monkey was set before some of our people, who had curiosity enough to taste it; but we had been too often in a menagerie for that, and felt, in this case, "ignorance was bliss."

Returning to our lodgings after these excursions, well-laden with sundry good things of this life, we indulged our appetites *a la Americano*, calling lustily on our lazy cook, Manuella, for coffee to begin with. But this extraordinary procedure bewildered her for the whole day; and we were almost ready, in despair, to conform to her Panama modes and customs, of coffee at seven o'clock, breakfast at ten, and dinner at four, having but one dish before us at a time, and coffee always last.

Our lodgings were remarkably comfortable, being provided with chairs, tables, sofas, and glass chandeliers, all of which, barring the chairs, were extra-luxuries in Panama. Our nightly bivouac upon the boards, was a funny scene. First, *shaking up* the boards, we spread out our tents, and rolling up in our camp-blankets, lay out in rows, provided with boots and pilot-coats for pillows. Then, sure that we could not fall out of bed, and that the curtains would not cause us to oversleep, we forgot the matter-of-fact world in dreams of El Dorado, till the sound of the matin-bell calling the faithful to prayer, aroused us to turn out, stow hammocks, and clear the decks for breakfast.

CHAPTER IX.

New Grenada. Ruins of old Panama. Past and present Condition and future Prospects of the New City. Proposed Railroad. Importance of Docks. Climate and Natural Resources of the Isthmus. The Treaty with New Grenada. Our late Charge des Affaires. Characters, Manners and Customs of the People.

HISTORY informs us that New Grenada was conquered and annexed to the crown of Spain by Gonzala de Ximenes in 1536, who overthrew Bogota, the native king, a redoubted chieftain, in honour of whom the capital of that name is called.

Seven miles from the existing city of Panama are the ruins of old Panama. Founded by the Spaniards in the early part of the sixteenth century, and famous as the port from which Pizarro sailed in 1525, on his first expedition to Peru, it was sacked and burned by bucaniers in 1670, under a famous chieftain, named Morgan. From this calamity it never recovered, and there is now only to be seen the remains of crumbling walls overgrown with trees, and a few houses of the natives.

Returning to the present city, we are impressed with the resources, munificence, and enterprise of its founders.

Its massive and high walls, its fortifications and defences, numerous large churches and other public

buildings, as well as substantial private edifices, erected from a species of stone brought from a long distance; all attest the truth of the foregoing observations.

As long as Mexico, New Grenada, and other South American States remained subject to the crown of Spain, the whole of their commerce, in obedience to her enactments, passed by the way of the Isthmus to the mother country and the world. Thus Panama became the principal commercial port of the Pacific, and the mart of the whole west coast of South America, and Mexico. But her glory departed the moment that trade and commerce, left to their natural channels, attained a comparative degree of freedom, and flowed into immediate and direct communication with other countries.

While under this state of things one generation has passed away, a new and longer day of prosperity is now apparently dawning on the next. The hope and expectation of the whole civilized world, long directed to the Isthmus route as the great highway of nations, are at length soon to be gratified. And with just pride and exultation do we point to its final accomplishment, by the enterprise and energy of the people of our Great Western Republic; thus adding another bright and enduring record to the volume of American history. Though both the Isthmus of Panama and that of Darien had been surveyed many years ago by the English, French and Spanish governments or capi-

talists, and the route by the former Isthmus ascertained to be entirely feasible for a railroad, and although especially England and the English eternally boast that theirs is the strongest government and wealthiest nation on earth, yet has it remained for their more powerful, political, and commercial rival, to open new portals to her Indian empire and China trade.

Crossing the Isthmus, both during the progress of the American survey and after its completion, we had every opportunity of observing the route selected for the proposed railroad, and cannot doubt its certain and speedy construction. The chief difficulty to contend with will be the floods of the rainy season, and their effect upon the viaducts and embankments; competent engineers will, however, overcome this.

This great undertaking once accomplished, Panama must not only resume her former position, but become one of the chief commercial cities of the western hemisphere. Her magnificent bay, salubrious climate, and fertile surrounding country, afford her every desired advantage. Capital, it is true, must and will be freely employed, in the construction of docks rendered necessary by the great rise and fall of the tides; but this improvement may, with others of similar importance, be accomplished with comparative ease. The smooth stone beach on the most accessible front of the city, will afford a solid foundation for the work, while abun-

dance of the best material may be obtained from the old walls and numerous ruins.

There is also every facility for the establishment of large commercial houses. Fine, substantial buildings, suitable for warehouses, many of them entirely fire-proof, and now quite unoccupied, may be obtained at extremely low prices. Much of this species of property, and especially of the old ruins, belongs to the Roman Catholic Church; but as their poverty is, notwithstanding, great, moderate prices would be accepted by them. As an instance, however, of the effect of the American emigration upon the value of real estate, a large and fine building is now occupied as an hotel at an annual rent of three hundred dollars, which could have been purchased a few months ago for one thousand dollars. A corresponding advance on property in general has, nevertheless, not taken place.

As to the climate of Panama, and the country immediately surrounding it, there can be none in the world more delightful than it is in the dry season. The morning is always beautiful and clear, with a fine air from the sea, the thermometer during the hottest part of the day 80 to 85 degrees of Fahrenheit, relieved by a refreshing land breeze, which usually sets in about noon, continuing till sunset, followed by nights cool and comfortable. This continues about four months from the beginning of the year, when the rainy season approaches and sets in very gradually, attaining its height only

during the latter four months of the^e year. Its intensity here is not near so considerable as on the other side of the Isthmus; and although it rains every day for at least four months, yet the afternoons are usually clear and pleasant. The atmosphere is of course sultry during this season, but to preserve the health, it is only necessary to keep the feet and person dry, and avoid too much fruit at all seasons.

The much-talked-of Panama fever is simply a common form of bilious fever, brought on generally by over-fatigue, or too great exposure to sun or rain. Dysentery also results from imprudence in diet, as in any other tropical climate. The yellow fever, or *black vomito*, never prevails, and the *Asiatic cholera* as an epidemic was unknown there until the present year; which is likewise the fact with all, or nearly all, the seaports on the Pacific. True, the native physicians denominate the Panama fever as yellow fever, but to our inquiries on the subject, replied that they never knew a case of the black vomito. Sporadic cases of cholera have occurred; but it generally avoided the Pacific coast during its epidemical prevalence in 1832. No better proof of the healthfulness of the climate can be given, than the general exemption from illness of the 5000 Americans who have already tarried there, in the wet and the dry season.

In addition to the salubrious and healthy climate, the surrounding country is literally a paradise, and

indeed the whole extent of the Isthmus affords abundant evidence of wonderful natural resources. Covered with a magnificent growth of forest trees, much of which is suitable for ship-building as well as for other purposes, the soil is also exuberant for every species of cultivation. We saw, besides, the greatest abundance of every kind of fruit, Indian corn many feet high in the stalk, and sugar cane growing spontaneously from year to year, without exhausting the soil. Hemp, cotton and tobacco, may also be grown in the greatest luxuriance, the planter dreading no frost, and having reference only to the wet and dry seasons, while the marshes of the Chagres and Rio Grand rivers would produce the finest rice. Gold is also found in great purity in part of New Grenada, while recent discoveries in Veragua, the adjoining province of Panama, have disclosed large deposits of excellent coal. These great resources in wood and coal will be found to be of incalculable advantage in the construction of the railroad, and supply of fuel to our locomotives and steamships. In short this is the real El Dorado, which so many of our countrymen have undertaken a voyage of 17,000 miles to behold in California.

For the invaluable treaty with New Grenada, entered into and confirmed during the administration of the late President Polk, the American people are chiefly indebted to our late lamented Charge des Affairs to that country, the Hon. Benjamin A. Bid-

lack, of Pennsylvania. Gifted with diplomatic talents the most eminent, he also combined a noble and generous disposition with a distinguished person and pleasing address, securing a paramount influence with the government to which he was accredited, and the highest popularity with the people among whom he resided. These qualifications, together with the well-known friendly and liberal sentiments of his government, enabled him to secure from the government of New Grenada that important and memorable treaty, and this too at a period when the ministers both of England and France were exerting their talents and influence to the utmost, to secure a similar treaty on behalf of their respective governments. The preceding narrative of facts, partially gleaned while in New Grenada, was extended and confirmed on our voyage home from Carthagena, by a highly respectable American gentleman, who was very intimate with Mr. Bidlack; conversant with the whole history of the negociation of the treaty, and placed in charge of the Legation by him preceding his mournful decease. Thus, has our country acquired one of the most important treaties negotiated in the history of the world, while she has lost one of her most patriotic and eminent citizens. Peaceful be his repose, and ever green his laurels.

As an evidence of the complete establishment of friendly relations with the people of New Grenada, we received, in common with most of our countrymen, the utmost attention and kindness from the

natives and residents of the Isthmus, and especially of Panama, as well as from Senor Don Mariano Arossemena, the Intendente of that department.

In character the educated classes are kind, generous, and open-hearted, anxious to acquire our language, and to afford every facility and inducement for our residence among them. Their manners, with less of the punctilio, and none of the hauteur of those of the Spaniards, partake of equal politeness, and greater sincerity. The character of the uneducated and labouring class of the natives is of course inferior in these qualities, but they are nevertheless a remarkably inoffensive and kind-hearted people. Notwithstanding the general inferiority of their mixed race, and the somewhat enervating effects of a tropical climate, they are able to undergo great bodily fatigue, and submit to arduous labour as canoemen, cargadores, muleteers, aguadores, &c. This disposition to labour is however not so freely manifested since the Americans have paid them so liberally, and it is unfortunately true, that they will, on all occasions, exact twice and even three or four times the price or sum for articles, or labour, from strangers, that they will from each other. They are nevertheless devoid of legitimate enterprise and business capacity. Though horses and mules, such as they have, are numerous and cheap, yet they employ no wheeled vehicles in Panama nor in the adjacent level country. Every hour in the day the *aguadores* may be seen carrying

four little jars or kegs of water fastened to a pack-saddle on a mule; these are sold at one rial each, and thus the Panamanians receive their supplies of fresh water. When a decayed tree falls across the road they travel, there it remains from year to year, the natives clambering over it, or preferring to go up to their necks in mud or water around it, to clearing away the impediment. It is plain, therefore, that they cannot be employed to advantage on the railroad, but labourers must be had elsewhere. Though they drink *aguardiente* or Cogniac when to be obtained, yet intoxication is not common among them. They are gifted with a full share of Spanish obstinacy, a very provoking instance of which we endured from an old fellow in Panama, who refused to sell a tin basin which we much needed, at any price, and only because it shone brightly, and he valued it as an incomparable ornament to his shop.

Having just remained a month among the New Grenadians, we now prepared for our departure, filled with many pleasant recollections.

CHAPTER X.

Embarkation and Departure for San Francisco. Taboga. Scenes and Incidents. Gulf of Tehuantepec. Coast of Mexico. Burning Volcano. Arrival of San Blas. Cape Corientes. Gulf of California. Cape San Lucas. Natural Cavern on the Shore. Magdalena Island. Escape from Wreck. Southern Cross. Cerros Isles. Harbour of San Diego. Coast of California. Point St. Vincent. Midnight. View of Monterey. Arrival at San Francisco.

THE strong tide of the Pacific was surging and dashing against the dark mole of Panama, and the waves were rapidly covering the steps leading to the water, when, with one foot in the sea and the other on the gunwale, we tumbled in among the stone ballast of a large bumbo provided to convey us to the United States mail steamer, "Oregon," which lay at anchor some three miles out in the bay.—After receiving our complement of fifteen or twenty passengers, with a corresponding supply of cigars and claret, which landed safely on our shins or "stove in the hold," we succeeded in prevailing upon our swarthy navigators to shove off. With "the blue above and the blue below," for cigars were all lighted, and the smoke was rolling from under the mess-kettles of the crew—we bid adieu to our lingering friends, and took a final view of the

ludicrous crowd of native *amigos*, as well as our watery eyes would permit.

Hoisting a bull's hide and leg of mutton sail on the rude bean poles used for masts, and tugging at the clumsy oars, *el patron* soon passed the huge-pointed rock rising from the midst of the bay, and in due time laid us alongside ; preliminary to which he displayed his bungling seamanship by hauling down his bull hide too late, and treating us to a stern chase with oars, only, against a strong tide, approved by the cachinatory applause of our friends on board.

Recovering from this, however, we reached the gangway, and amidst the howling, confusion, and fright of the crews of the various *canoas*, we clambered up the side and trod the deck, rejoiced once more at the prospect of proceeding to our destination. Finer specimens of naval architecture are not afloat than the steam-ships of this, the second line, established by American enterprise in the Pacific. The first line of British steamers on this ocean originated in the energy of William Wheelright, Esq., an American resident of Valparaiso.

But we found two hundred and eighty passengers, too many for comfort in a steamship of only one thousand tons. We all had cause for congratulation, however, in escaping a voyage of ten or twelve weeks by a sailing vessel ; and among our passengers some had paid for this object enormous prices, even to get berths in the steerage. These will not

soon forget their first experience of "life in the steerage," and we opine, that not even *duff* would tempt them to a second lesson. Besides the agreeable society of two American ladies accompanying their husbands, several travelled officers of the army and navy assisted to enliven the tedium of the voyage.

Roused at daybreak by the sailors' song at the windlass, we gazed from our state-room window at the beauty of the dawn on the distant mountains, and with watch in hand, at 5 A.M., on the morning of the 13th of March, noted the first revolution of the wheels towards the El Dorado of our hopes. Hastening on deck, we beheld the enchanting beauty of the Bay of Panama in all its extent. Its semicircular shores, skirted with green foliage, and enclosed with the high mountains of the Isthmus, hold within their embrace a miniature sea; while the bold islands of Flamingo, Perico, Taboguilla, Taboga and others, rise some thousand feet or more above the surface, perfectly covered with verdure.

In a short time we came to anchor close to the shore, in a lovely little cove of Taboga. The whole island seems a paradise, and is filled with every variety of tropical vegetables and fruits. Among groves of the orange and mango, reposes a picturesque native village, while from a neighbouring mountain dell, comes leaping forth a sparkling streamlet, forming in a natural basin of rock a crystal pool, where the natives, men, women, and chil-

dren, resort in troops to bathe every morning and evening.

Vessels all obtain their supplies of water, fruits, &c., at this island, and the Pacific Mail Steam Ship Company have fixed their general depot for coal, &c., on its shores.

The crowd of canoas had precipitately scattered from alongside, and the foam was rolling away from the first dash of the steamer's wheels, as the last of the fruit-seekers leaped to the platform of the gangway over the side. Turning quickly to secure the fruit obtained after a long ramble on shore, he beheld the canoa far astern, while the ludicrous gesticulation of the patron, and loud cries of "Stop her! stop her!" were equally unavailing. The luscious treasures were "sour grapes," past all redemption.

We now commenced our voyage in earnest, and running ten knots an hour with calm weather and smooth sea, rounded Point Mala at sunset, and felt that we were once more "rocked in the cradle of the deep," having entered the Pacific through the "lubber's hole," as an old naval cruiser round the Horn expressed it.

We had now reached within seven degrees of the equator, and with a dead calm, and the heat of the furnaces, were sweltering at 95 to 100 deg. Fahrenheit. Sleeping on deck became the order of the night, while buckets of old ocean, and the shady

nooks under the bulwarks, were at a premium early in the morning and during the day. In a few days we were off the Gulf of Tehuantepec, and favoured with the refreshing breeze and flashing white caps which usually prevail in that latitude. Besides the usual sights at sea, we were daily favoured, as we approached northern latitudes, with a look at different species of whale, and the cry, "There she blows," often brought our spy-glasses in requisition. The blow of the whale is simply the vapour of its breath, and not sea-water, as many suppose.

North of Tehuantepec we made land again, which proved to be the bold mountain coast of Mexico, seen distinctly forty miles from the ship. Keeping within sight of these mountains, we saw, as night closed in, a red glare in the sky, which deepened as the darkness increased, until we were all convinced that it could be none other than a burning volcano. Referring to the chart, we found it to be the volcano of Colima, which is 12,000 feet high, and nearly 100 miles from the coast. Its appearance from the ocean was strange and mysterious, and our imaginations were well prepared when apprised of its true character, to conceive of the rocks of molten fire hissing above the clouds, the red lava pouring in crested fury from rock to ravine, from ravine to valley.

On the following day, we hove in sight of the Tres Marias—three pretty islands of the Mexican

port of San Blas, where we soon after arrived, and remained two days, to obtain supplies of coal, fresh fruits, and provisions. Off the mouth of the River Santiago or San Juan, (whereon the town lies,) an immense white rock rises isolated from the sea, bearing a singular resemblance to a light-house, and always steered for by ships heading for the port. Near to this is also a singular group of white rocks, looking, from a distance, exactly like a flock of sheep. The description of the town, and our visit to it, we leave for a future chapter. Being half way or more on our voyage, we welcomed our arrival there; and among the several small vessels in port, one recently arrived from El Dorado furnished us with most exciting intelligence.

Rowing from shore to ship the night before sailing, we were favoured with a magnificent display of the phosphorescent light of the sea. The night was calm and still, broken only by the music of the surf or stroke of the oars, their flashing blades sparkling with gems of sapphire and pearl, while the turquoise and diamond fell in resplendent showers from our foaming prow.

Having despatched letters for our friends by the Mexican courier to Vera Cruz, we took our departure from San Blas early on Sunday morning, 25th of March. Listening to the tramp and song of the sailors at the capstan and windlass, we caught the words—

“ The Oregons are a jolly crew,
O, yes, O !
A bully mate and captain, too,
A hundred years ago.”

The second and last lines formed the chorus, and they roared it out right heartily, bringing many from below in time to behold the sun rise above the mountains of Mexico in great glory and magnificence, requiring but a small stretch of the imagination, as its full orb was displayed above the highest peak, to picture old Atlas standing beneath, upholding the world upon his palm.

In the afternoon we made Cape Corientes in sight on our starboard bow, and early on the following morning were off the entrance to the great gulf, or more properly sea of California. At the season when south-easters prevail, this gulf is stormy and the navigation dangerous. The port of Guaymas on the Mexican main some 500 miles from its mouth, has a considerable commerce in the imports and exports of Sonora and the adjoining States ; but vessels do not often venture in the gulf during the prevalence of the south-east gales, for although nearly 200 miles wide at the entrance it soon narrows to only about forty.

At sunrise of the next morning we hove in sight of Cape St. Lucas, the southernmost land of the peninsula of Lower California. Here, then, was California, and though not *the* El Dorado, yet the high lands we beheld, were a continuation of the

famous *coast range*. With intense interest we accordingly gazed upon the mountains and shores of the cape (or rather promontory, fifty miles wide), presenting the forms of vast naked pyramids and conical peaks, towering one above another, with dark chasms and ravines yawning between. We sailed within half a mile of the land, and saw a beautiful little cove where there is good anchorage, just inside the south-western extremity of the cape. Here there is a sandy beach, but the shores are mostly of volcanic rock as indeed the whole country appears to be, affording here no vegetation, except scraggy moss or a few prickly pears. On the eastern side of the peninsula just above the entrance of the gulf, we could discern by the aid of telescopes the small town of San Jose, where ships go for water and supplies, and to trade with the natives for the gold dust and silver ore, which they obtain from the mountains of the interior, in sufficient quantities for their livelihood.

The spectacle, however, which most interested us as we approached close to the shores of this bold mountain promontory, was a wonderful and most beautiful natural cavern, opening its yawning abyss into an immense rock towering on the verge of the ocean, while two others of a pyramidal form, stood sentinels to guard the entrance, with the wild surf roaring between.

The largest opening in front, was as perfect as if regularly arched, while at the side appeared a simi-

lar but smaller arch resting upon a pillar descending into the waves. Looking into the cave by the principal entrance, and out by the side arch, the waters of the pretty little bay beyond were dancing like fairies in the bright sunlight, whilst the giant breakers within thundered defiance from their gloomy haunt.

To the northward of Cape San Lucas, we met a rapid change in the weather: with a strong head-wind came the fogs and wet, and driving mists peculiar to the coast, and woollen clothing became necessary. Sailing almost continually in sight of the shores of this peninsula, we had an excellent opportunity to observe their formation. This appeared to consist entirely of volcanic mountains, looking like chalk and blue clay, or bare sand hills, bleak and desolate along their whole course. Much valuable mineral wealth is believed to be stored in this uninviting region. Magdalena Bay may yet be as famous as that of San Francisco.

Approaching the large island of that name which with the main land forms the bay, we had all turned in our berths one night, when the sudden stopping of the wheels, and frequent signals of the engineer's bell, awoke us from slumber. Going on deck, we found the ship close on the land, here some three or four thousand feet above the sea, while we were heading by the stars, south by east, instead of north-west, which was our proper course. Thus she had run far up between the island

and the main, and before putting about, the land seemed right under our bows. The shores are bold with plenty of water close in, and no reefs; and there may also be a safe but narrow passage, but the charts of the north-west coast are very incomplete and imperfect. Our skipper was, therefore, a little alarmed, particularly at what appeared to be breakers close aboard, but which we discovered to be an immense school of *bonitas* or skip-jacks, which we several times met with on this ocean in such extraordinary numbers, that their incessant leaping from the waves covered the sea with foam, presenting a most animated and beautiful sight.

We had a fine opportunity this night, of observing the remarkable constellation of the Southern Cross. Composed of five stars, three of which are of the second magnitude, it was at that hour full upon the meridian, and displayed the perfect form of the cross.

At sunset the following day, we were off Cerros Isles, their towering mountain ridges, bathed in the glories of the retiring orb, presented the appearance of rivers of burning lava, flowing in irregular and winding streams to the ocean, between which were the deep and dark ravines. One little isle nearer the main, looked like a pyramid of flaming fire, while over all floated the purple clouds crowning with beauty the scene.

The change in the atmosphere now became very great, the thermometer having rapidly fallen to

55 deg. ; we began to enter the *intemperate* zone, and to manifest symptoms of *tremens*. Approaching the termination of the coast of Lower California, we passed between the mainland and several beautiful islands, rising abruptly from the sea, and of the most fantastical forms. One in particular bears the form of regular architecture, resembling in shape the great reservoir of the Croton Aqueduct in New York.

At daylight of the 30th of March, we came in sight of the Coronados, two high, round-topped rocks off the port of San Diego, and soon entering its beautiful little semi-circular harbour, we hailed with joy our own soil and the first American port on the Pacific. Protected on the north and east by high bluffs, the face of which, seaward, has been cut down perpendicularly with a breakwater formed by the old Spaniards, this is a fine and safe harbour, having everywhere four and half to eleven fathoms water. It is also susceptible of complete defence, by a fortification on the bluff and a water battery on the low island at the entrance to the southern channels both of which might be easily constructed ; and all these advantages combined, would make San Diego the best naval depot on the coast. We found here only a few hide houses, the town being a mile or two inland, and only seven of the male population remaining, all the rest having gone up to the mines.

Delaying only to land the mails, we proceeded on

our voyage, passing just without the harbour an immense field of seaweed, the leaves very beautiful in formation, and provided with a large ball to enable them to float on the surface. We saw also many small whale, called the California grey, which are not molested by whalers, as they furnish but little oil.

We were now off the coast of Upper or Alta California, towards which all the maritime nations of the earth were carrying their flag and their emigration. With the highest interest, therefore, we gazed upon all the changing views before us. One extraordinary bluff especially attracted our attention. It presented a face of black and white rocks having every angle and battlement of an immense natural fortification, while rising immediately above it is the coast range of mountains, and beyond this, in the background, are the towering peaks of the Sierra Nevada, covered with snow to their summits, mingling the deep green, purple, silver and pearl, lost amid the clouds; while spread over all was the mantle of the changing sunlight.

The same day we were off Point St. Vincent, a high promontory, covered at this season with the most verdant carpet of grass, and with fields of wild rape or mustard, a golden yellow flower; while from the summit descends a regular succession of natural terraces, covered with the same beautiful drapery to the very edge of the water. Herds of wild horses were seen apparently gazing

in wonder at the moving monster of the sea, or rushing affrighted to the hill top. The scene was quite enchanting after our long voyaging from home, and delightfully contrasted with the iron-bound shores and volcanic desolation of Lower California. The succeeding night we entered the bay, or rather bight of Monterey, and aided only by the light of the stars, enjoyed a midnight view of the town, with the amphitheatre of high-wooded hills in the background. Amused by the reverberations along the shores of our signal gun, the inhabitants showed here and there a light; but we were not enabled to form any definite idea of the town. Only one small vessel was in port, and our mail boat brought back intelligence of the desertion of nearly all the male inhabitants for the mines.

Just before resuming our voyage, the ship's carpenter, a very active and intelligent man, dropped over the side, a mile from the shore. With a life-preserver around him, he was on his way to the Gold Region, having landed his traps along with a steerage passenger, put ashore in the mail-boat.—As the strong tide was setting in shore, he probably landed in safety, unless he became food for sharks, of which there was some risk. Thus were we reminded that we were near the termination of two voyages, and within reach of the "famous Gold Region of California.

Having sailed 3500 miles in the Pacific, our anticipations of the character of that ocean had been

verified. A well-manned whale-boat could have followed the whole distance in our wake with entire safety; and, indeed, two of these arrived about that time in the Bay of San Francisco from the Sandwich Islands, with adventurers.

Making our voyage in a steam-ship, we enjoyed continual views of the shores of the Pacific. There is no beach, but the coast range of Alta California descends into the sea, as if to set perpetual bounds to the vastness of this great ocean. These are not mountains, properly so called, but a series of round, irregular hills, very rarely displaying any signs of vegetation, except the sparse grass and wild flowers, with here and there patches of a kind of mint, and other weeds.

At 10 A. M. of Sunday, April 1st, 1849, we hove in sight of the Farallones, two large detached rocks in the sea at the southern side of the magnificent gateway or straits, opening through the coast range into the Bay of San Francisco.

The morning was clear and beautiful—the deep blue sky covered here and there with a fleecy cloud, while the fine nor-west breeze, fresh from the ocean, chased the gambolling waves clear into the open portals of the hills. The tide was setting in at the rate of five miles an hour, and our gallant steamer ploughed her way through the sea with yards at aunto, and streamers flying, with decks, shrouds, and wheelhouses covered with an excited multitude, eager for the promised haven.—

As we entered the mouth of the Narrows, here some two or three miles wide, our eyes rested on a high, rounded bluff on the south side, backed by a few rods of yellow sand beach, and on the north a range of bolder hills, some 200 to 500 feet high, maintaining their forms unbroken to the ocean, where they seem to have been cut off by some huge spade or cleaver, presenting perpendicular cliffs of rock and bluish clay to the roaring surf. Covered with green grass and low shrubs, but no trees, these hills present a picturesque yet barren appearance, affording, nevertheless, a beautiful contrast with the flat, sandy coast of the Atlantic. The innumerable ravines were clothed with patches of wild-flowers, and the ridges covered with herds of wild cattle and horses, grazing in every direction.

Sailing, as it were, into the midst of the hills for about three or four miles, the great Bay of San Francisco gradually opened to our view, a miniature ocean. Right ahead appeared Bird Island, with the white surf foaming at its base, and thousands of wild fowl filling the air above it; yet farther on our starboard bow, Wood Island lay in front of the cove of San Francisco, while on our larboard uprose the dark heights of Angel Island, the largest of the three, with the beautiful little Bay of Sancelito, under its lee on the main. Here we came to anchor alongside the "Ohio," seventy-four, delivering our despatches and mail for the squadron.

CHAPTER XI.

Sancelito. Mutiny and Desertion. San Francisco. Climate of the Coast. Description of the Town. State of Affairs. Chunks of Gold. Scenes and Incidents. Hotels, French Cafe. Gambling Tables. A Walk among the Tents. View of Ocean and Bay. Presidio. Mission of San Francisco Dolores. Reason of the Long Concealment of Gold Discoveries by the Padres. A Night at "Merrill's," and Preparation for Departure.

SANCELITO Bay where we were now anchored, is a beautiful little cove on the northerly side, and just at the inner termination of the Narrows. Enclosed on three sides by high and almost perpendicular hills, it is entirely protected from the strong north-west gales of the ocean, while towards the Bay of San Francisco, it is shielded by Angel Island. Having a great depth of water and good holding ground, vessels of the largest class anchor close to the shore, and our squadron of seven ships, including the "Ohio," lay there at the time of our arrival.

Good water is obtained from a little rivulet among the hills, and here we were informed was the new city of Sancelito. This after a close examination we discovered to consist of one board shed and one tent, holding on to the hill-side like a woodpecker against a tree; nevertheless, the wide and elegant streets were much frequented by dirty

fingers on the map, and lots were frequently changing hands at advancing prices.

No sooner was our anchor down opposite the city, than mutiny and disaffection appeared among the crew. The gold region was too near, temptation too powerful, and they refused duty, were handcuffed, and sent aboard the "Ohio," where they cheerfully shared Uncle Sam's grog, awaiting a chance to run. The same night the third officer with part of the crew kept on board the steamer, took their leave *a la Francais*, with boats alongside, which were recovered, being only used by them to effect a landing.

The efforts of the captain thus to retain his crew being found worse than useless, we got up steam on the following day, and leaving Raccoon Straits and Angel Island on our larboard hand, passed Bird Island, and coming up with Wood Island, cast anchor in the cove of San Francisco between that and the main, a distance of eight or nine miles from Sancelito. This cove lies on the westerly shore of the bay, and is concealed from view as you enter the Narrows, by the high hills on their southern shore. Emerging from these, the town and anchorage suddenly present themselves to the excited stranger, and what a sight is here, what a contrast to the latitude and longitude of Richmond, what a damper to the climate of Italy! Shade of Pocahontas, restless for the honour of the Old Dominion, retire once more to your repose! Spirit of Tasso,

linger yet amid the floral bowers of your loved Italia! Ghost of Saint Francis, welcome us to your chosen shores, where a forbidding climate and desolate scene confirmed the austerity of your ancient followers!

Rising abruptly from the water, an amphitheatre of three or four ugly round-topped, barren hills, with their intervening holes, form the site of the notorious town of San Francisco. These hills and ravines answer a two-fold purpose. The miserable sandy clay soil produces a weed which a starving jackass will scorn, and a fine dust for the visual organs, which the most impenetrable eyelids is not proof against, while the deep ravines and opposing ridges afford full sweep to the perpetual gales from ocean and bay in the summer, with a "smart chance" for rivulets and ponds in the winter.

As it is an "ill wind," however, "that blows nobody any good," so these summer gales are approved of by the laundresses of the town, and though the rigging is sometimes parted and clothes carried away, yet they are at the risk of the owner. The rainy season of winter may also enable the inhabitants to obtain some fresh water altogether superior to the brackish element of their wells; this advantage, however, must not be too loudly boasted of, inasmuch as we are informed that the rainy season sometimes omits its visitation for two years in succession. The dry season proper is from the 1st of March to 1st of November. The mornings are

then generally clear, with a hot sun until the middle of the day, when the sky becomes overcast and gloomy, a strong north-west gale sets in from the ocean, often accompanied at night-fall by a thick, driving fog, and the thermometer rapidly falls some forty degrees or more, making the nights most dreary and uncomfortable; constituting a climate in the highest degree repulsive and disagreeable. This we found to be the climate of the coast in the month of April, and all who resided there agreed that it is worse as the summer advances. It is nevertheless perfectly healthy, the bracing air from the sea inducing a vigorous appetite, and as patients of the hydropathic system are said to become fond of the treatment in time, we can only account in a similar way, for the admiration evinced by some for this climate of sudden transitions and never-ending fogs. We noticed that catarrhs or common colds always settled on the lungs with a violent cough, especially after the free use of wines.

Threading our way in a small boat among some fifty sail of vessels lying at anchor in the cove, and mostly deserted by officers and crews, we landed among the slippery rocks underneath a high bank, up which we scrambled some fifty feet, perpendicular. Here was a strange scene. Vessels from nearly every quarter of the globe had brought the denizens of every clime; and verily to coin a suitable word, we were in the Cosmopolis of the world.

Discharged convicts, from New South Wales,

Mexicans, Kanakas, Peruvians, Chilians, representatives of all the European nations, with here and there the dangling cue of the Chinaman, were intermixed like stray cattle in a pound. Amidst confusion the most comical, and despair the most piteous, these poor wretches were tumbled into a heap of pots, pans, kettles, bales, and boxes, or were wandering hither and thither, seeking a place of shelter.

Disengaging ourselves from the throng as soon as practicable, we wended our way along the hard-beaten hill-side, ascending and descending for one or two hundred yards, till we came to the town which is situated at the farther bend of the cove. There we paused to observe the scenes in progress at the other landing, where, upon a flat beach of deep black sand were piled trunks of every description, some with young gentlemen sitting upon them and looking very forlorn, others poised upon shoulders used only to broadcloth or epaulette, while here and there slender arms unused to toil were pushing a well-laden wheelbarrow through the deep sand and up the gentle declivities. Mingled with these were negroes or sailors, Jack being generally "half-seas-over," at ten dollars a-day. Many queer scenes were thus hourly witnessed, and we were forcibly reminded of the old nursery rhyme of Jack and Jill.

Proceeding in our survey, we found the streets,

or properly the roads, laid out quite regularly, ~~these~~ parallel with the water being a succession of terraces, and those ascending the hills or along their sides being in some instances cut down ten or twelve feet below the surface. Except a portion of the ~~street~~ fronting upon the cove they are all of hard-beaten, sandy clay and as solid as if Macadamized. About three hundred houses, stores, shanties and sheds, with a great many tents, composed the town at that period. The houses were mostly built of rough boards and unpainted; brown cottons or calico nailed against the beams and joists answered for wall and ceiling of the better class of tenements. With the exception of the brick warehouse of Howard and Mellers, the establishments of the commercial houses of which we had heard so much, were inferior to the outhouses of the country seats on the Hudson; and yet it would puzzle the New York Exchange to produce merchant princes of equal importance.

Although the reader is doubtless well apprised of the extraordinary state of things prevailing there in regard to commercial, social, and domestic affairs as a result of the gold fever raging in all parts of the world; yet we here place some of these facts on record for future reference: trusting that if the perusal of them is tiresome, it will be omitted and something of interest found in succeeding pages.

Everywhere we beheld the most astonishing evidences of the abundance of the gold brought from

the mines. Quarts of the dust or scale gold were to be seen on the tables and counters, or in the safes of all classes of men, and although the form of small scales was most common, yet pieces or lumps of a quarter to three ounces were to be seen everywhere, and among several *chunks*, one was shown us, by C. L. Ross, Esq., weighing eighty-one ounces, or six pounds and three quarters. This was solid, pure gold, with only the appearance of a little quartz in it. The aggregate of gold in different forms seen by us in one day amounted to bushels, and this, except some of the largest lumps, was too pure for jewelry or coin, without alloy. As a consequence of this abundance of the precious metal, though the price per ounce was maintained at sixteen dollars, yet the actual depreciation in comparison with property and merchandise was very great. Common labourers could only be obtained at ten dollars per day, and but for a few days retained.

Carpenters and blacksmiths, the only mechanics employed, received one ounce per day. Lumber sold as high as 6000 dollars per thousand feet. The merest necessities of life commanded the most extravagant prices. Laundresses received 8 dollars per dozen, and cooks 150 dollars per month; and it was nearly impossible to obtain either. The prices of houses and lots were from 10,000 to 75,000 dollars each. A lot purchased two years ago for a barrel of *aguardiente* was sold recently for 18,000

dollars. One new three story frame hotel, about forty by sixty feet, cost 180,000 dollars, and rented for an interest of more than twenty per cent. per annum; small rooms for gambling purposes renting for 400 dollars per month. Yet, notwithstanding these enormous incomes, speculation so raged that as high as twenty-five per cent., was actually paid for the use of money for one week. Vast quantities of merchandise, unsuitable, useless, and worse than valueless, had been landed on these shores from all the ports of the Pacific, from the Sandwich Islands, and the East Indies. Think of whole cargoes of calicoes and silks, for a country with comparatively no female population; of rich and costly furniture, to embellish, generally, stables converted into shanties, or to lie in heaps upon the sand; of houses ready constructed, to be erected upon town lots, which none but a Wall street or London banker could purchase; of tobacco enough to supply the whole present and prospective population for two or three years; and of paper, which the stupendous wastefulness and extravagance of all the congresses and legislatures of the Union, could not have consumed since the Declaration.

Our high fever of excitement, amid such a state of affairs, would be difficult to define. Wandering everywhere, eyes and ears were constantly employed. The bar-room and hotels were crowded with revellers—money, wines, and liquor flowed like water. Gold dust, doubloons, and dollars

were the only currency men would look at, old miners often scattering smaller coins in the streets by handfuls, rather than to count or carry them. A French cafe was thronged with hungry customers, at three dollars for a cup of coffee, a bit of ham, and two eggs. Gambling prevailed to an extent heretofore unheard of and unknown. The monte and roulette tables, encircled continually day and night by a dense mass, were covered with bags of gold dust and heaps of doubloons and Mexican dollars, which were incessantly changing hands in enormous amounts. Pistols and revolvers, fired in recklessness or fun sometimes, made the air musical with loud reports or whistling messengers, while, at other hours, intoxicated men, mounted on fleet horses, were rushing to and fro through the streets, or tramping over the portico of the City Hotel.

Leaving these wild scenes, we strolled among the tents in the outskirts of the town. Here was "confusion worse confounded," chiefly among Mexicans, Peruvians, and Chilians. Every kind, size, colour and shape of tent, pitched helter skelter, and in the most awkward manner, were stowed full of every thing under the sun. Outside, innumerable articles were exposed for sale or stored in the open air, where the smoke of the cook's fire, or greasy pork, overpowered both our olfactory and visual organs. This duty and similar ones were performed by men, who without the aid of female help-

meets, seemed about as helpless, and looked as black as Cain when driven into the wilderness.

Ascending to the top of one of the hills above the town, we enjoyed a prospect of the kind unequalled in the world. Attracted by the thunder of the surf we looked upon the great Pacific, dashing perpetually at the base of the coast range, or rolling with rapid current through the Narrows, while stretching away to the north and south, a distance of seventy miles, the waters of the Bay of San Francisco surrounded by irregular green hills, appeared like a great inland sea, receiving the floods of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers for distribution to the ocean. At our feet lay the town of San Francisco; apparently built in a night, containing two years ago but a dozen houses, known as Yerba Buena (good herb) by the Californians, from the wild mint growing on the hills; but now denominated, by general consent, Yerba Mala, or "bad herb." Beyond this was the anchorage, already crowded with vessels of every kind, their boats rowing to and fro, while large ships were beating through the Narrows or rapidly coming in with all sails set, affording a good contrast to the white wings of the small craft dotting the wide surface of the bay, or threading their way among the distant islands.

Over these hills, and near the entrance of the Narrows, is the old presidio or fort; and about three miles from the town, towards the bay, lies

the old Mission of San Francisco Dolores. The buildings are said to be much dilapidated; and the good padres are making an effort to repair the church; but the day both of their supremacy and influence in California has gone by, never to return.

This they had the sagacity long ago to foresee; and thus only can we account for the rigid silence as to the existence of gold in the country, maintained for more than a century.

That these priests were cognizant of the abundance of the precious metal at that period, is now well known; but they were members of the extraordinary society of the Jesuits, which, jealous of its all-pervading influence, and dreading the effect of a large Protestant emigration to the western, as well as to the eastern shores of America, applied its powerful injunctions of secrecy to the members of the Order; and their faithful obedience during so long a period, is another proof both of the strength and the danger of their organization.

Returning from our rambles, we took up our quarters for the night at "Merrill's on the hill," or as we afterwards christened it, by general consent, the Living House. The proprietor, a carpenter by trade, with his wife, (a pleasant and industrious New-England dame,) enlisted in Stevenson's regiment, and thus found themselves in El Dorado in the niche of time. Building himself a good house, they have since received and entertained crowds of their countrymen, with comparative comfort to the

latter and profit to themselves. Here we obtained a snug bed on a floor in the corner, and under heaps of clothing shivered till morning, entertained all night by the howling nor-wester of this delicious climate.

We, therefore, concluded we had enough of it, and determined to be off to the diggings next day.

CHAPTER XII.

Departure for Sutter's Fort. Schooner Rainbow. Gold Rock, or Red Island. Two Brothers and Two Sisters. Wild Fowl. Guano. Seal. Sonoma Bay, or Bay of San Pablo. Beautiful little Vale. Straits of Karquinez. City of Benecia. Suisun Bay. Monte Diablo. Suisun City. Mouths of the Sacramento and San Joachin Rivers. New York of the Pacific. Volcanic Formation of the Californias. A Night on Board, and Breakfast on Shore. Tulare Marshes. Pillar of Fire. Sacramento River. Scenery. Navigation. Game. Ducks and Wild Geese. Elk, Wild Horses. Bald Eagles.

On the afternoon of the 3rd of April, having transhipped our freight and baggage from the steamer, and completed the purchase of necessary supplies, we wended our way once more to the landing, each man with a bag, box, or bundle on his shoulder, and obtaining a small boat, were soon on board the schooner "Rainbow," of fourteen tons, Captain William Smith, late farmer in Oregon. This famous, clean little craft, was formerly a pleasure steamboat, presented to Mr. Leidesdorff, of San Francisco, by the Russian Fur Company, and pur-

chased by Captain Smith, for the enormous sum of 5000 dollars; but before he left the country he had sold her for 5500 dollars. Besides eight tons of freight and baggage, we had on board fourteen passengers, and four sailors from the Sandwich Islands, working their passage to the Gold Region, making, with the captain, nineteen in all. For this trip, as far as the Embarcadero, on the Sacramento, 165 miles, we paid 25 dollars each, and 5 dollars, per 100 pounds, for baggage.

Getting under sail with a stiff westerly breeze, we passed rapidly up the bay, admiring its beautiful bold shores, carpeted with green, or studded here and there with a species of dark scrub oak. We soon made the little island called, indiscriminately, Gold Rock, and Red, or Treasure Island, while directly a-head in the Straits of San Pablo, and at each entrance, lay the four large rocks called the "Two Brothers" and "Two Sisters." These were covered with a white coat of guano, with thousands of wild fowl screaming around them, consisting of a species of duck, with long neck and bill, called *schaggs*, and a bird of the goose kind, called "brant."

Surrounding these rocks, and in the rapid current of the straits, the black fur seals were floating and sticking out of water in every direction, their heads precisely resembling the head of a large pointer dog, and of a dun colour.

Passing through these straits we entered the

beautiful little bay of the same name, or as it is sometimes called, Sonoma Bay. The sun was now declining, and gazing on the northern shore, we saw, illumined by its bright rays, a lovely little vale, protected by gentle wooded declivities from the chill nor-westers, while the sparkling rivulet gushed from its secluded dells, mingling its murmuring stream with the noisy waters of the bay.

We now entered the Straits of Karquinez, where the shores on either side become bolder, and being clothed to their summits with a carpet of grass, were at this season of the year very beautiful. On the northern shore, near the eastern terminus of these straits, and where the ground below the hills for a few hundred yards is less precipitous, lies Benecia*. City, forty-five miles from San Francisco. The house of Mr. Cooper, with one or two other houses, and ten or twelve shanties, comprised the then population of the city. As its apparently bleak and sterile back country appears incapable of producing supplies, it is inconceivable how a town of any size should even spring up here, except by the united efforts of a great many speculators. Lots were in the first instance given away, on condition that the recipients should build upon them. After this, from 20 to 40 dollars were obtained for a few lots, an elegant map was furnished, with numerous streets and public squares, with high-sounding names, a scow ferry-boat was established

* Pronounced Venecia.

and called the "Benecia City Ferry," and an announcement made through the *Alta-California* newspaper, that certain *public-spirited* gentlemen had gratuitously set apart several lots in the new city for a *University*, to be conducted by a recently-arrived reverend gentleman, whom they denominated "professor." This "first professorship" of the first University of California, was called by some of the *many* wild and uneducated young lads of the country, "The Karquinez Strait Jacket Professorship." In addition to this enterprise, two old store ships were brought up from San Francisco and safely moored along the bank, furnishing a forest of masts, fully proportioned to this great commercial port. The result of all which was, that city lots were selling in April last as high as 1000 dollars.

Resisting the temptation to tarry awhile amidst the thronged streets and public edifices of this great city, we were wafted by a steady breeze past all danger from the rapid ferry boats, into the shallow but extensive waters of Suisun Bay. Steering through the North Channel, we found no less depth than four fathoms water, and recent surveys have confirmed our observations. This, however, was during the annual river flood. The shores of this bay are lower and more diversified, the green volcanic hills on the south side resembling the waves of the ocean, while beyond these, the dark bold form of Monte Diablo rears its towering height, con-

spicuous from a great distance as lord of the *coast range*. Just at the entrance of the bay, on the north-east, is the site of the city of Suisun, where one tent, it was confidently believed, would soon be erected. The location is level and quite pretty. Into this bay debouche the Sacramento and San Joachin* rivers, discharging a large body of water not only through their proper mouths, but a great number of *sloughs*.†

Sweeping down with a broad and rapid current, these two rivers, of which the Sacramento is much the larger, form at their juncture the commencement of the series of great bays, which at some very remote period burst their way through the coast range to the ocean, forming the entrance to the bay of San Francisco. This event was doubtless coeval with the great volcanic convulsions, which for ever fixed the external natural formation of the whole of the Californias both Upper and Lower. While in Alta-California, a beautiful valley watered by broad rivers was then formed or allowed to remain west of the Sierra Nevada range of mountains, so in continuance of this valley and westward of the same range, on the coast of Mexico, the great Gulf of California was created in the land, or cut off from the ocean by this mysterious and terrific agency. As a further proof of this theory, for after all we can only theorize, the peninsula and coast range of Lower California are in proportion-

* Pronounced San War-keen.

† Pronounced shies.

ate elevation to the coast range of Alta-California, as the depression of the basin of the gulf is to that of the valley of the Sacramento and San Joaquin. The depression necessary to form the basin of the gulf being greater than that of the valleys, so is the elevation of the mountains of the peninsula greater than the coast range of Upper California. The width of the gulf also corresponds with that of the valleys, being an average of forty to fifty miles.

Continuing to be favoured with a fair wind, we passed the mouth of the San Joachin and sailed up the Sacramento, having on our starboard hand the beautiful and level peninsula formed by the junction of the two rivers, recently purchased by George M'Dougall, Esq., and others, for a town site, and from the similarity of its position called "New York of the Pacific." At the head of ship navigation, and most contiguous to the trading posts and the mines, there is every reason to believe that it will eventually become one of the largest towns in Alta-California. The proprietors proposed to bestow upon it the Indian name of the Sacramento, with which we are unacquainted.

Night now closed around us, and we prepared to pass it on board our little launch as comfortably as circumstances would permit. Dividing our number into two watches, we laid boards across from the seats on the side of the after saloon, which said boards constituted our mattress. This would contain seven persons with close stowage, and the

hours fixed for each watch were from eight to one, and one to six o'clock. Falling into the second watch below, we enjoyed ourselves in the observation of the pains and perils of the first "in for a snooze." Though accustomed to their native element of Nantucket oil, and pretty *slick* Yankees themselves; yet lamper eels in a mill dam never had a tighter squeeze. In the forward hold, and separated only by a bulkhead, was a quantity of fragrant bacon; closely attached to this, a poor swain—his "soul in one unbroken sigh"—breathed forth; while fifth, sixth and seventh, were *all right*, including one whom they called Jocko, probably from the chattering kept up by his teeth in consequence of the cold. The watch on deck, in the meantime, amused themselves by singing to keep their feet warm, in which they were joined by a large Newfoundland dog, baying the moon as lullaby to the sleepers. Thus passed the long and chilly night, broken only by the unwelcome cry of "tumble up, tumble up," to the watch below. When it came our turn to wedge in, we soon forgot our real woes of pressure, noise and cold, in dreams of "joys that we've tasted." Aroused at day-break by a shout of turn out, we, by dint of many hard thumps, induced the outsider to commence that operation, and thus enable us to accomplish that same.

"Going on deck, we found the "Rainbow" laid up to the shore, skirted by charred and tangled under-

wood, and our fellow passengers busily engaged in preparing breakfast. The smoke was curling in thick clouds from the fire on the wet *tule*, and amid much tribulation and suffocation the process of cooking was in slow progress. Bolting down our first meal in the wilderness with such appetite as the keen air supplied, we speedily resumed our journey.

Leaving the shore, and gaining once more the middle of the stream, we saw on either hand immense *tulare* marshes stretching as far as the eye could see. These marshes abound in the valley of the Sacramento, often covering fifty miles in circumference. The *tule* is a kind of rush, but grows higher and thicker than our common rush, and at this season of the year, "green grow the rushes, O," throughout the whole of the extensive plains bordering on these rivers. In the Autumn before the rains, or in Spring before growing up again, they are frequently set in a blaze from the camp fires of the Indians or others, causing most extensive and long-continued conflagrations. The flames from one of these illumined the sky all the previous night, forming an immense volume of fire by night, and of smoke by day.

The Sacramento River is quite wide near its mouth, and gradually lessens to an average width of about half a mile in the main river, forming a fine, broad, and placid stream, with graceful curves at long distances. At first, its margin is hedged

only by thick underwood, or tule, but higher up both shores are skirted with large trees, chiefly a species of scraggy white oak and sycamore. These are covered with the mistletoe bough and a species of long, dry moss, flowing from the branches, with leaves of fairy net work, its light shade of green contrasting beautifully with the dark foliage of the mistletoe and oak. The river was now much swollen from the melting ice and snow of the Sierra Nevada mountains, and as the tide only rises from two to three feet, the current is very strong in mid channel, making the trip a tedious one for sailing vessels at most seasons of the year. Sunken, or partly floating snags abound near the shores, and vessels unable to stem the current often get foul of them, or aground on the mud and sand shoals, but generally without injury. For steam navigation, however, the Sacramento cannot be excelled, and its winding and varied shores, while delighting the traveller with their charming scenery, furnish abundance of fuel to aid in propelling him on his course.

Gazing towards the coast range on the west, we beheld the beautiful table-land at its base covered with luxuriant grass and flowers, and skirted towards the river with a green, waving border of new-grown tule. In the far distance we could distinctly see herds of wild horses and droves of elk quietly feeding, or with flowing mane and uplifted antlers bounding over the ridges, or snuffing the air, and

gazing affrighted towards the white wings of our gliding craft.

In the early morning the air was filled with noisy flocks of ducks or wild geese, in numbers most extraordinary and inconceivable: the latter, especially, extending in single and double files, two and three miles in length. During the day we saw many large bald eagles soaring at an immense height, while in mid air the large grey hawks were ever hovering over and watching for their prey, the latter pouncing, in one instance, upon a poor snake, and bearing him, in squirming helplessness, to the family larder in some old oak. The large nests of the eagles, made of coarse sticks and leaves perched on the tops of the towering and decaying sycamores, seemed like grey wigs crowning the ancient patriarchs of the forest, and tempting us often to a good shot at noble game. Nightfall found us at the entrance of Merritt's Slough, where we prepared to encamp.

CHAPTER XIII.

Merritt's Slough. Camp on Shore. Camp Fire, and Surrounding Scenes. Convicts from New South Wales. Party from the Mines. Digging on the Yuba. Gold Discoveries. Breaking up Camp. Warping through the Slough. A Tramp for Game. Barber's Rancho. Their Experience at the Mines. Soil and Climate of the Sacramento Valley.

At the close of the second day after our departure from San Francisco, we left the main channel of the Sacramento, and entered one of its numerous *bayous*, called Merritt's Slough. This is usually followed in preference to the main river, because the windings of the latter increase the distance some twenty miles; but as the current of the *slough* is very strong, it is often avoided by the larger vessels.

Watching for a favourable spot, our farmer boy *skipper* put in for a landing; and shoving the nose of our brave little schooner gently among the "tangled wild wood," we scrambled through the thicket of willow and primrose, reaching the open belt of timber extending from the *slough* to the river.

Having subsisted all day on ship biscuit, and water sweetened with black but saccharine sugar of the Sandwich Islands, we were as hungry as grizzly bears. Though we had abundance of barrelled provisions laid in for the mines; yet, in the haste

of our departure, and the peculiar shrewdness of some of the "all right" portion of our committee on supplies for the journey, our comfort was sacrificed by too great eagerness for "a large profit on chocolate."

Selecting a dry and level spot under the trees, all hands were speedily engaged in camp duties. Carrying ashore our tent, blankets, hammocks, camp hamper, &c., we wore an Indian path in the woods, while some carried water from the Sacramento, or fell to, with axe in hand, to make tent poles and pins; others kindled by the side of an old log the *kitchen fire*, running "hither, thither, and yon," for dried wood, or with bowie-knife and spoon cut the pork and mixed the coffee.

Pitching tent to most of us was a new employment; but we managed to arrange it quite commodiously on a part of Nature's carpet, where there were neither stones, stumps, nor jagged rocks; taking care, also, to fix it well to windward of our fire, to avoid the *fix* of a conflagration.

The two cooks for the night now commenced operations. With coats off, and sleeves rolled up, one busily attended a large iron pan, in which the process of par-boiling and frying pork was conducted, followed by a grand fry in the fat thereof of soaked pilot bread; while the assistant cook, diving into smoke and flame, with a crooked stick hauled forth a bed of live coals, on which he care-

fully deposited a large tin pail filled with the pure water of the Sacramento, to be converted in due time into the most approved coffee. [Tin cups, plates, spoons, and bowie-knives, were now rapidly brought into requisition ; and nineteen hungry wolves, scouring the snow-clad plains of Siberia, and gathered in magic circle around their prey, could not have *vanished* the bones with equal celerity. While thus, with quiet animation, pleasantly employed, shouts from the river side, and taper masts peering among the trees, announced new comers ; and soon the resounding axe and crackling flames were heard on every side.

Two more *launches* had arrived, and attracted by our camp fire, hauled in to the neighbouring shore. One of these parties came from the bay, or *from below*, as they termed it, and their appearance confirmed the impression that they were from *below*, in more senses than one. Dressed in discoloured red shirts, their ugly and dirty faces peered with cunning impudence from beneath flaming red flannel caps, which, from their shape, might be the camp pudding-bags ; around their waists circled greasy leathern belts, in which revolved, at ease, a wooden-handled sheath-knife, used to blood of man and beast ; while leaping through the flames of their camp fire with hideous yells, they completed the evidence of their demoniac origin or destiny, we would not like to say which. Suffice it to say, that they were from New South Wales, which was

already pouring its refuse population into the "lovely valley of the Sacramento."

The other party were direct from the gold mines, or *placers*, and were returning to San Francisco with the proceeds of their *washings* and *diggings* on the Yuba* River. These were hardy and quiet men, and though they had experienced their share of hardship and disease in the mines, seemed accustomed to these vicissitudes of frontier life, and well satisfied with the exchange of a portion of health for a portion of gold. One of them, an intelligent and educated Scotchman, gave us much interesting information as to *diggings on Yuba*. The most beautiful specimens of scale gold we saw came from that river. On some of the bars this gold was only obtained at the depth of ten to fifteen feet, but the *digger* was often rewarded for his toil by the richness of the deposits there.

We found these men true *cosmopolites*, ready to enter into conversation with all, furnishing all the information in their power in exchange for the latest news from the States. When informed of the election of General Taylor to the Presidency, they evinced a strange mixture of satisfaction and chagrin: of satisfaction at having another *old hero* and Indian fighter at the head of the government, and of chagrin that he was not elected by the democratic party; but finally concluded that it was "mighty likely he would turn out a *real* democrat

* Pronounced Juba.

at last ;" and we could not avoid hinting our belief that he would *turn out* a great many *at first*, at all events.

The *gold fever*, however, absorbed all other topics with us ; and one of the party thrusting his bowie knife into the ground, revealed innumerable shining yellow particles, immediately announcing gold discoveries on the Sacramento and claiming the *placer*. This afforded much amusement to our friends the *diggers*, who soon convinced us that it was only mica or isinglass with which the soil is filled.

The evening was now far advanced, and turning to the smouldering' embers of our camp fire, we heaped on log after log, mingled with dry brushwood, and rolling up in our blankets and pilot coats, were soon fast asleep ; some in the tent, others lulled to repose by the side of the humming and genial fire, while its light revealed the dim outlines of the neighbouring camps with the dark forms of their slumbering groups.

At earliest dawn all were again astir, and after the indispensable, and, to us, most intricate duties of cookery, were again accomplished, and breakfast demolished, we proceeded with great celerity to *break up camp*. This was soon effected, and tent, blankets, pots, kettles, pans, crowbar and axe, disappeared, to enact their part in other scenes ; the half-burned logs, with lazy smoke alone remaining to indicate our deserted camp.

Now commenced the tedious and laborious operation of *warping* through the *slough*, rendered necessary by the strength of a current like a mill-race. This process of course devolved on the crew, but for the sake of our own progress, as well as to aid them, we took turns in lending a hand to the ropes. Two of the sailors taking a canoe and coil of strong rope, paddle near the shore, a distance along which they judge their line will extend to the vessel. Making securely fast to an old stump, or the trunk or limb of a tree, close to the water's edge, they return rapidly down the stream, unreeving the rope, taking care that it does not get foul either of trees or half sunk snags. Reaching the vessel the line is there seized by all hands, and with a *yo heave, O*, she is slowly and steadily warped up stream, accidents from snags, shoals, and overhanging trees frequently occurring, a gentle spice to the patience of the crowd.

As all did not engage in this agreeable exercise at once, the remainder of our party, equipped for a tramp on shore, fully prepared with double barrel and rifle, for birds, deer, or grizzly bears. Leaving the openings of the wood, some waded along the edge of the *tule* in search of ducks or geese, while others plunging into the frequent thickets kept the river bank, crossing many little creeks and wet ravines in quest of snipe or other close game. We thus obtained, in the course of the morning, a few specimens of *blue-winged teal*, or wood duck, and

some of the larger tribe of black ducks ; but were too late in the day for the wild geese, which we heard in immense numbers at daybreak. Deer are found chiefly in the mountains, and the grizzly bears do not frequent the valley till later in the season, when acorns are ripe.

After a ramble of eight miles, or thereabout, we found ourselves at the head of the *cut-off*, or island at the beginning of the *slough*, and again at the main river. Here the banks were more elevated and cleared, and near the head of the island we discovered a log cabin, or rancho. Observing a tall, sinewy backwoodsman engaged in scraping the hair from a deer skin, on the end of a log hard by the cabin, we approached and had a grand confab with him. He informed us that we were at "Barber's Rancho." He was one of two brothers of that name, who, with their father, had squatted on this island and the one opposite, which appeared a more desirable location even than this. In the summer of last year, when the gold was first discovered, they were thriving mechanics at Monterey. Deserted by all their apprentices, and finding it impossible to obtain others, they were obliged to follow the tide of adventurers to the *placers*, leaving the father at Monterey. Arrived at Feather River, one brother was immediately taken ill, and suffered a long time with the Sacramento fever, which was followed by a similar attack to the narrator. Both, however, were enabled eventually to dig, and after

a few weeks more thus employed in obtaining gold, they returned from the mines, and selecting this island on the Sacramento, built their cabin. One brother was again suffering with the fever, while the one who stood before us was but a shadow. Yet these men, as this one informed us, had been roaming the prairies, and trapping in the Rocky Mountains for years, enjoying the full vigour of health. He boasted of having belonged to Freemont's battalion; and alluding to the hardships of that expedition, especially of the terrible Christmas night on the Santa Barbara Mountain, described by Mr. Bryant in his book on California, he denounced the government for its neglect to pay off the men of that battalion, and vowed he would never go soldiering again. He alluded kindly to Colonel Freemont, and professed to like him as an officer and a man. He also expressed a great desire to see Mr. Bryant's book, and reiterated his assertion that some of the men of that battalion ate *ten pounds* of beef in a single day; at the same time deliberately declaring his opinion that we could do so likewise under similar circumstances. This flattering conclusion was no doubt occasioned in his mind by our urgent desire to purchase his last quarter of venison, which hung most temptingly in sight. He ended the account of themselves, by asserting that their three little lots in Monterey, bought two or three years ago for a trifle, were now worth 16,000 dollars; which was no unreasonable supposition.

Observing a small plot of land broken up by the spade, we inquired as to its fertility, and were informed that the soil, though apparently a rich, black loam, is inferior for raising wheat and other grains, except where very highly manured. Their object in squatting here, was to cultivate vegetables for the supply of the emigrants on the river, and at the trading posts, and their first attempt at this had not been very encouraging.

We, of course, received this statement with many grains of allowance, for their natural desire not to have too many neighbours and competitors. But from many other sources, including the experience of settlers of some years standing in the Valley of the Sacramento, this impression of the character of its soil was afterwards fully confirmed.

The climate, as it came under our observation, though more genial at this season than that of the coast, we found to be very different from our anticipations. The sky, it is true, was at all times beautifully blue ; the atmosphere wonderfully clear and dry ; but the heat of the sun's rays from nine o'clock in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon was intense ; when the north-west wind from the ocean reaching the valley, it blew a steady breeze till ten or eleven o'clock at night, accompanied and followed by a fall in the thermometer nearly as great as at San Francisco ; say as much at least as 30 degrees. The intense heat of the sun during the morning overhead, with the chill breath

of the ice and snow melted river, gave us most peculiar and disagreeable feelings; and these causes combined with the immense *tulare* marshes, and rapid fall of the streams in summer, must ever make the climate of the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin dangerous to human life.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Bath in the Sacramento. Party of Oregonians. Encampment. Early Rising. Otter. Rancheria of Walla-Wallas. Landing by Moonlight. Deserted Camp-Ground. Magnificent Scene. Glory of the Moon and Stars. Sublime to Ridiculous. Fishing in the Sacramento. Salmon. Old Schwartz. Lazy Indians. Russian Embarcadero. House of Keysburg, the Cannibal. A race at Warming. Suttersville. Arrival at the Embarcadero.

WHILE waiting the arrival of the "Rainbow," at the head of the island, some of our number availed themselves of the opportunity to lave in the cold waters of the Sacramento. At this period of the year the water is very pure and delicious to drink, being cold as the ice of the Sierra Nevada, from which it is then supplied, and for this reason we generally preferred a shower bath to a plunge in the stream.

As the day wore away without the schooner's arrival, our only chance for food was to retrace our steps down the banks of the slough. Here we met a party of Oregon men, on their way up from San

Francisco in a whale boat, which they had sold to one of our number for the moderate sum of 300 dollars. Some of these men had just arrived from the Columbia River, but others had been some time at the mines. They were much dissatisfied with the climate and country of California, and avowed their determination not to settle here, but to return to their beloved Oregon, of which they gave most glowing accounts. Among them was Mr. Canfield, one of the few who escaped from the massacre of the Rev. Mr. Whitman's family by the Cayuse Indians. After exchanging news with them, we trudged some four miles "bock agen" ere we met the schooner, which had required all day to be warped the same distance.

Gladly we aided in fixing our encampment for the night, and enjoyed our supper of fried pork and bread with a *gusto*, which the pale and delicate frequenters of Delmonico's might in vain aspire to. Rising at two o'clock in the morning, or rather of the night, two of our party renewed the camp fire, and commenced preparations for breakfast; for, "be it known unto all female women by these presents," that our combined efforts in this early stage of our experience, required three full hours to produce an undoubted fry for all the party, and a kettle of aromatic coffee, whose clear surface would honestly reveal two well-burnt faces of red-nosed, anxious cooks. If, alas! however, after all our efforts, the grounds wouldn't sink to the bottom,

despair sat throned upon our brow, because we were certain of a row with the "waiters."

Resuming our slow progress, we reached the termination of the slough at the close of this "our fourth day out;" where entering again the main river we took a fine breeze, and with studding-sails aloft and aloft, the graceful "Rainbow" dashed once more the spray from her bow, like vapour dispelled from the cloud crowned by her beauteous namesake in the sky. The last rays of the setting sun this day marked with their fleeting presence two events as fleeting as they; the least romantic of which was of greatest moment to us. This was no other than the sudden and irrecoverable disappearance of our best little axe over the side, an article which a man need only pass one day in the wilderness without, to know the full importance of. While mourning in helpless regret over this catastrophe, "Otter! otter!" was shouted by Skipper Smith, and turning our eyes quickly to the shore, we saw the sleek little fellow swimming for dear life under the bending bank, and finally dive to a place of refuge known only to himself.

Before it was quite dark we also had passed a *rancheria*, or Indian village on the right bank of the river, consisting of some ten or twelve round and rudely thatched huts. These were tenanted by a portion of the Walla-Walla Indians, who came over the mountains from Oregon a few years ago.

Among them we saw a pretty squaw named Mary, an acknowledged belle at Sutter's Fort.

At nine o'clock, the wind dying away, we landed by the light of the moon in a fine open space on the right bank of the river. Here we found a deserted old camp-ground, and building our fire against two immense prostrate and partly burned trunks of trees, we pitched our tent before it. The scene here was beautiful and picturesque in the extreme. In the background appeared the green shores of the river, skirted with tall isolated trees; the bright moon reflected on the bosom of the gleaming Sacramento; and revealed our pretty little schooner nestled among the overhanging branches; while the forked and crackling flames of our camp fire cast their lurid glare upon our white-walled tent and busy groups. Beyond all, stretched away the beautiful open prairie, with the towering forms of the Sierra Nevada in the far distance, mingling their snow-clad summits with the clouds; while in the foreground and but half within the gloaming, the blasted form of an old monarch of the plain lifted its charred branches high in air, holding in their loftiest eyrie the home of the dauntless eagle.

The purity of the atmosphere and the glory of the moon and stars exceeded anything we had ever beheld; shining with wonderful brightness from the midst of the azure vault, disclosing ethereal fields of illimitable space: while the skies by day presented the most beautiful tints, blending gradu-

ally and imperceptibly to the horizon. Delighted with the magnificence of the night, and wild, strange aspect of the surrounding scene, we retired at a late hour to our repose, on the bosom of kind old mother earth, filled with an absorbing sense of the beautiful in nature.

Here the rapid descent from the sublime to the ridiculous was fully realized. Ten men, mostly six-footers, with here a little fat Falstaff, and there a spoiled and wheezy specimen, with disabled pallet, occupied the ten feet square within the tent; while uneasy, in a canvas hammock aloft, from the tent poles, hung an unshaven and unshriven specimen of humanity, more between heaven and earth than he ever hopes to be again. The squirming attempts to trim "stowage in the hold" were ludicrous in the extreme; while the centre of gravity of him in the hammock was nowhere to be found. The man in the red blanket was informed that he did wrong to deprive "Ole Wirginny" of his long heels, while he of the blue was notified that calves' foot jelly had not been asked for on the present occasion; who retorted that neither was pickled tongue at all desired. Finally, snoring was interdicted, except to the man without a pallet, and all insiders were specially charged not to turn over without general notice.

The wind failing in the morning, we tried our luck at fishing in the Sacramento, and procured a number of small and delicious fish, resembling the

trout of our mountain streams, but more bony. Salmon are said to abound also in this river, and we saw them frequently leaping up the stream. The Indians fish for them with seines, but are too lazy to obtain more than will supply their own wants.

Resuming our voyage we passed one day the rancho of old Schwartz on the left bank, a strange and eccentric specimen, well known as a *character* in California. Near his cabin we spied some of the civilized Indians, and hailed them for salmon, but in vain; as they were quite too lazy to move from their sunning process on the sloping bank.

As the afternoon progressed we came in sight of the Russian Embarradero. The stream is very wide below this point, and immediately opposite to it sweeps off to the left hand, forming a perfect right angle, resembling an immense canal. A considerable trade in hides, tallow and furs, was formerly carried on by the Russians here, with their trading post called Sitka, on the north-west coast, but the old building here is no longer occupied by them; changing our course at this bend, the wind before fair, was now dead ahead, and "luff, luff, all you can," was the order, but without avail; for we gradually hugged the shore and laid up for the night.

Within half a mile of our encampment, we saw the house of old Keysburg the Cannibal, who revelled in the awful feast on human flesh and blood, during the sufferings of a party of emigrants near

the pass of the Sierra Nevada in the winter of 1847 : a painfully interesting description of which we received from the lips of our late lamented friend, John Sinclair, Esq., at whose house on the American River, the survivors of the party were received and entertained. A full and accurate account of these events have been furnished to the public by Mr. Bryant.

It is said that the taste which Keysburg then acquired has not left him, and that he often declares with evident gusto, "I would like to eat a piece of you ;" and several have sworn to shoot him, if he ventures on such *fond* declarations to them. We therefore looked at the den of this wild beast in human form with a good deal of disgusted curiosity, and kept our bowie knives handy for a slice of him if necessary.

The following day being Sunday, and the beginning of the sixth day of the week since we left San Francisco, we continued our progress, but were obliged to warp through the "reach," as these singular bends in the river are called. As there were several other launches, filled with Mexicans, Australians, and Frenchmen, in the like predicament, we had an exciting and ludicrous race at warping. We obtained and kept the lead a long time, but all the vessels were frequently getting on snags, or foul of trees. On several of these occasions we gained rapidly the others, the wet rope swaying through

our hands with an "O yes, Oh," on the lightning-rod principle; but finally our turn came to hug a snag, too, and the dirty-faced Sidney crew offered to carry letters for us to the Embarcadero, which we replied to, by suggesting to send up a rope with a noose for each of them. This sally seemed to choke them off with unpleasant recollections.

With a fair wind we reached Suttersville at noon. Alongside the bank two store-ships were moored, and having some freight for that of Messrs. George McDougall & Co., we went on board of her, and thence on shore. Here we saw Captain McDougall, late of one of the Indiana regiments in Mexico, and Mr. George McKinstry, and received much polite attention and information from these gentlemen.—Suttersville at this time consisted of several houses, built, and in process of erection near the river.—The location is very pretty, and is higher than the shores along the river generally. Some two or three hundred yards back, the country rises still more, and here, on a beautiful green bank, is a substantial and neat brick house, constructed of California brick, a kiln of which is near at hand. They were making a road from this place to connect it with Sutter's Fort, and the road to the mines; and it will no doubt be a convenient distributing point for traders and emigrants to the "placers" on the American River. Passing a beautiful natural park or oak opening on the left bank of the river, we came in sight of the long-looked-for Embarcadero.

This famous landing is situated at the mouth of the American River, and, to all practical intents and purposes, at the head of navigation on the Sacramento. Speculators, however, have located *cities* which are a caution to grizzly bears, eighty miles higher up the stream. Two of these cities are opposite to each other, straight as a bee line, and it has not been decided yet which of them is the head of navigation. That fact will depend entirely upon the price of lots. Here also ground for universities has been *reserved*, and the learned fiat has gone forth :—

This classic shade,
No digger's spade
Shall e'er invade,
It shan't.

Nor grizzly bar
Shall revel thar,
Nor anywhar,
He can't.

For which see,
Lines on a tree.

Hauling the "Rainbow" up to the high bank among huge sycamore trees, we waded ashore on a wet plank with one end on board, the other at the edge of the water. Thus had we made the trip through the bays and up the Sacramento to this point, in exactly five days, having camped four nights on shore. This was considered a favourable

run, and we were the first to arrive, out of all our fellow passengers in the "Oregon."

We found several launches discharging freight and passengers, the latter being obliged, many of them to wade back and forth through the icy waters of the river, carrying their luggage of every kind on their backs. In an old board shantee and cook shop, on the shore, we obtained, for one dollar and a half each, a piece of beef and cup of tea, *both* of which we concluded were of the growth of California. We now employed our leisure in reflections upon our late journey; and certainly remembered the beautiful scenery of the broad and winding Sacramento with delight. Thus ended Easter Sunday, the 8th of April, in El Dorado, where neither almanacs nor calendars were known or consulted.

CHAPTER XV.

Sacramento City. Sutter's Fort. Indians. California Horses. Oregon Teams. Encampment. Camp Guard. Coyotes. Wild Geese. Start for the Mines.

SACRAMENTO CITY lies at the junction of the American River with the Sacramento, and includes in its plan Sutter's Fort and the surrounding land. At the junction of the rivers, however, are built the most of the houses and shops, at the time of

our visit, some fifty in all. The bank of the river here is quite bold, but seems to be made ground, as the country back of it where the town is located is much lower.

The American River at its mouth is a sluggish and narrow but deep stream, and along its margin, as also some half a mile on that of the Sacramento, extends a belt of tall but scraggy sycamore and white oak timber. Besides the traders' stores and houses scattered here, are many tents, which are continually appearing and disappearing, as their owners arrive and depart for the mines.

Pitching our tent on the borders of the American River, we found ourselves surrounded by Peruvians, Chilians, Mexicans, Kanakas and our own countrymen; as well as Europeans of every kind, class and description. All were hand and glove, and the salutation of "how are you, gentlemen," was universal. Convicts, whose term had expired in Botany Bay, educated Americans and Europeans, or Kanakas fresh from Honolulu, were all on an equal footing here.

The latter, who are the natives of the Sandwich Islands, are a remarkably intelligent and amiable race. Amphibious from childhood, they furnish excellent sailors to our whaling fleet in the Pacific, and are apt to acquire every species of knowledge. Liked by all they come in contact with, they are universal favourites.

Early in the morning succeeding our arrival, we

"totted" our chattels on shore, in the midst of a scene of general confusion ; and borrowing a pair of platform scales worth 1000 dollars here, we weighed our freight and settled our enormous bill with the skipper. In engaging the vessel, it had been stipulated that our necessary bedding for the trip, should be free of freight charge. Here our Yankee friends were particularly *cute*, having stowed in the hold for their party of nine, large single mattresses stuffed full of clothing, for sale at the mines, and these they coolly claimed to be necessary bedding. But it was no go, for Captain Smith was not accustomed in the West, to that mode of doing business, and could not be made to "stand up to the rack." Yet to avoid dispute, he relinquished half the account.

The same afternoon, we reached the famous Sutter's Fort. Emerging from the timber, we found ourselves on the edge of a most beautiful plain, covered with verdant grass, perfectly level, and surrounded on three sides with the green enclosure of the same species of trees. Cattle and horses feeding in every direction, and the white tents clustered about the low walls of the distant fort, forcibly reminded us of the primitive simplicity of pastoral life. In the midst of this scene, and at the distance of two miles, appeared the fort ; yet so wonderful is the purity of the atmosphere, that we could not persuade ourselves to believe it to be more than half a mile from us. Crossing a wide and deep ditch, through which the well-beaten road is

worn, we soon entered the fort by the southern gateway. Here we found ourselves within an immense court, and none of the cleanest either, corresponding much more with our ideas of an eastern caravansary, than of a fort. About one hundred and fifty yards in length by fifty in width, the four sides consist of two *adobe* or mud walls, the outer wall fifteen, and the inner one ten feet in height or thereabouts. A space of perhaps twenty-five feet was left between these, and the whole was roofed and partitioned, or divided by similar walls into apartments of various sizes, now occupied as stores, blacksmith shop, bakery, billiard room, bowling alley, &c., and besides the southern gate, there was a similar one at the eastern end. The outer walls were never pierced with musketry or mounted with cannon, the purposes of defence against the simple warfare of the Indians being fully answered by bastions, the guns from which entirely commanded the walls. On the southern side and eastern end of the fort, there is a large *corral* enclosure of mud walls for horses.

Opposite the southern gate, within the enclosure and connected with the northern side, is a substantial house with a basement, and story above. This was formerly the residence of Captain Sutter, and very comfortable, though of course not very elegant.

Built by the labour of Indians under the direction of Captain Sutter, and an active and intelligent assistant, named Bray, a "gentleman of the old

country," the fort with its appointments, and the carpenter's, joiner's, and smith's work, is said to have cost as many dollars as it contains *adobies* or sun-dried bricks. The Indians had to be supplied with finery and with food, and the only source from whence to obtain supplies of all needed articles (except food) at that time, was the trading post of the Russian Fur Company, and at enormous prices.

The scene described by an eye-witness of the feeding of these two or three hundred Indians, morning and evening, must have been sufficiently degrading, according to ideas of civilized life, and yet it was a great improvement upon their mode of living. Long troughs inside the walls were filled with a kind of boiled mush made of the wheat bran : and the Indians huddled in rows, upon their knees before these troughs, quickly conveyed their contents by the hand to the mouth. But few of these Indians now remain about the fort or make their appearance, being scattered and rendered useless by the present state of affairs in the country. Some are employed still in servile capacities, but they appear to be of little use except as *vaqueros* or keepers of horses and cattle. We saw one of the most expert of these *vaqueros*, scouring the plain, mounted on a fleet horse, driving the others under his charge into the *corral* for the night. Covered with a gay *serapa* or Mexican blanket, his appearance while careering over the ground at full speed

of his horse, was the very beau ideal of natural grace and reckless daring.

We had heretofore read such glowing descriptions of the California horses, that we were now greatly disappointed in their appearance. In colour generally white or bay, they are small in size and mostly devoid of graceful or fine points. Light and muscular, and trained only to the saddle, they have great powers of endurance, and will travel in a day double the distance accomplished by our horses, with half the fatigue. Accustomed only to the natural gait of the wild horse, the gallop or *lope* as it is here called; used to cruel spurs and a powerful bit, and guided by the gentle pressure of the rein to the side of the neck, they are the best hunters probably in the world. In general appearance they will not compare with the American horse, nor at all equal him on the farm or in the team.

For the purpose of our journey to the mountains, we had obtained Oregon teams of oxen, six fine, steady fellows to each waggon. Many yoke of these were then employed in this business, and with enormous profits to their owners; freight being from 30 to 40 dollars per 100lbs. for the trip of fifty miles. We were however so fortunate as to pay only 20 dollars, which was one advantage in being ahead of the crowd of our passengers per steamer.

As night closed soon after we reached the fort, we determined to remain there and take a fresh start in the morning. Anxious to see and become

acquainted with Captain Sutter, we learned on enquiry that he had gone up to the mountains to have "a talk" with the Indians. He resides now at his farm on Feather River, having sold the fort to the different traders and others who occupy it. At the period of the gold discovery, he had sufficient wheat growing to produce 40,000 bushels. Instead of employing his friendly Indians to dig gold for him, he persevered in saving his wheat, and though he finally accomplished this with much trouble and great expense, he was obliged to abandon most of it to decay in the sheaf for want of labourers. He has however since that period realized a fortune from sales of his property of Sacramento City, much to the gratification of his innumerable friends. We found his old residence in the fort owned and occupied by Mr. McClellan and family, from Jackson county, Missouri. Emigrating across the Sierra Nevada, Rocky Mountains, and vast prairies of the West during the previous season, he had arrived here in the niche of time, and disposing of his waggons and oxen at gold diggers' prices, commenced with the rest of his traps and several fine milch cows, to keep a regular boarding-house in the fort. In this we found him ably seconded by his wife and daughters, the latter of whom had endured the hardships and performed the camp duties of their great overland journey during the illness of their mother. Here we obtained a fine supper and breakfast of beefsteaks, fresh bread and butter, be-

sides tea and coffee with delicious milk ; all of which were highly appreciated after feeding on hard bread and salt junk.

We now pitched our tent, and encamped for the night outside the fort and close to our waggon, the remainder of our fellow travellers being encamped some five miles in advance. Soon after nightfall, some of the prowling vagabonds about the fort, had the audacious villany to steal a fine horse, which the owner had just dismounted from, within the walls. Obtaining another, he quickly went in search of the thief, and whether he found him or not we never learned ; but, if he did, death was his portion, powder and ball being judge and jury in the common law of California applied to such a case. This incident determined the majority of our party to keep a camp-guard for the protection of our party during the night.

Engaged in this duty much against our individual opinions and inclinations, three or four of our number turned sentry, two or three hours each. The night was clear, but cold ; and though the rainy season had not long terminated, there was a heavy dew. Wrapped in a faithful pilot coat, we were ruminating upon the stars, or the lumps of gold in prospect, while attached to the end of a long lariat in hand, our worthy pack-horse ruminated upon the grass. A burst of loud laughter, in the direction of the fort, aroused our vigilance ; and turning sharply around, we demanded the password from the daring

intruders. "Roast onions," or "whiskey punch," we forget which, was given, and they were permitted to pass the lines without being fired upon. They proved to be some of our newly-made friends in the fort, who had heard of our proceedings, and come down to see the fun, and return some newspapers loaned them. If the sleepers within the tent did not awake by our merriment, it was only because the resounding woods were a little too far off to return the echo.

When left to the silence of night, and pursuing the sentry's "lonely round," we heard the frequent bark of the coyote, or small prairie wolf of California, which abounds throughout the valley of the Sacramento. Sometimes they approached within a few rods; and nothing but the desire to preserve the slumber of our tired comrades, prevented us from treating the rascals to the contents of a double-barrel. Horses staked out with the leather or hide lariats, are often set free by the gnawing teeth of these coyotes; but they are not so apt to sever the lariats made of hair.

As the day dawned, the plain was covered with flocks of wild geese rising in every direction; but our active duties, preparatory to a start, prevented any sport. One very large and fat specimen, obtained the evening previous, we now prepared for a future meal. We also laid in a supply of pork and other necessaries for the journey.

Previous to departure, one of our esteemed com-

panions, who was bent on obtaining information, having ascertained the hardship of the travel in the mountains, and heard of the murder of several Oregon men by the digger Indians, concluded to return to San Francisco in the snug little cabin of the "Rainbow." Recovering his blanket, which had been packed away by accident among sundry India-rubber beds, state-room stools, and knives and forks among our Nantucket friends, he bid us adieu, much to our regret, though, as it proved, judiciously enough, for the fatigue would have overpowered him.

We now took our start in earnest for the *placers*, with the luggage of four of our number on a large double farm-waggon, drawn by six oxen driven by a stout young Oregonian. We had purchased the day before, a good pack-mare, for 200* dollars, (formerly worth 10 dollars,) and one bestrode Jenny Lind, as we named her; while the remainder tramped off on "shanks' mare."

CHAPTER XVI.

American River. Drowning Horses. Leidesdorff's Rancho. Talk with Captain Sutter. Encampment at Green Spring. The Blue Tent. "Digger" Indians. Wild Flowers of the Prairie.

FOLLOWING the course of the American River, we struck into the beaten road towards the north-east, and were soon upon the open prairie and up with the advance party. Our cavalcade was now quite considerable, composed of three heavily-laden wag-gons, drawn by eighteen oxen, accompanied by five horsemen and twelve pedestrians. We were surprised at the rapid gait and perfect training of the oxen, but this they had acquired in their long journey across the western prairies. The driver of our team was a slow and sure, stout and steady young man from Oregon, named Harrison; his immense head of fiery red hair seemed, however, to belong nowhere but in Yorkshire. We soon found he had no love for Indians, as they once captured him in the Rocky Mountains, stripped and bound him to a tree, and some sudden alarm alone saved him from torture and death. No doubt the rascals thought a scalp, red both outside and in, would be a fine appendage to their collection of similar curiosities.

As the morning advanced we were glad to throw

off our coats, and becoming tired of double barrels where we saw no game, they were also soon sticking out of our waggons "seven ways for Sunday." With pantaloons tucked inside of our boots, hunter fashion, coats off and beards on of some weeks growth, contrasted with countenances of the Kanaka hue, we were certainly a most uncouth looking party, and verily "a sight for to see." We had grand masters and patriarchs enough, to have formed an Ancient and Independent Order of Loafers.

Our road for some miles lay along the borders of the American River. After passing the former rancho of the late John Sinclair, Esq., we found the soil to be nothing but a deep fine sand slightly mixed with loam. Below this some twenty feet or more, perpendicular, is the bed of the river, distinctly seen through the clear waters which roll their beautiful current over it, sometimes still, placid and deep, at others rushing along with impetuous force. The spring floods were not yet at their greatest height, and the stream appeared only twenty or thirty yards in width, yet the overhanging banks worn away by its perpetual energy were evidently in a continual state of transition. This leaves frequent bars on the opposite side where the shores are much lower, and no doubt they contain some portions of gold. The land on that side of the river is also said to be more capable of cultivation and of irrigation.

We witnessed here an animated but unpleasant spectacle. Some fifty or sixty horses had been driven into the stream to swim across it, at a point just above a strong rapid. Into this they had been unfortunately swept by the current or by taking a wrong direction, and the poor creatures were struggling and snorting in affright, unable to stem the rapids, or to gain a footing on the precipitous bank. Several were entangled in the strong thicket growing in the edge of the streams, and one poor fellow had resigned himself to his fate. Meantime the *vaquero* sat on his horse upon a small island higher up, in mute despair, unable to render any assistance; and many of them must have undoubtedly drowned.

Continuing our progress, we arrived at noon at Leidesdorff's Rancho, situated on the American River, ten miles beyond the fort. Built of logs and *adobies*, it is a plain, substantial house, with several outbuildings, and is now occupied by a Mr. Kelly, and another family, a mother and daughter; the latter a widow, and apparently only about fourteen years old. Her husband was shot the previous winter at San Francisco. The mother invited one of our party to accept the hospitality of her house, and remain till the next morning; but seeing only one sleeping-apartment, which was also the dining-room, he politely declined.

While resting here, and refreshing ourselves with hard bread and the cold river water, we had the

gratification of seeing Captain Sutter and party ride up. He was accompanied by H. R. Schoolcraft, Esq., Chief Alcalde of Sacramento City, and Captain Smith, a Virginian gentleman, for many years resident in Peru, who was at the head of a party engaged in extensive operations at the Mormon Islands on the American River. There was also with them several Indian attendants, and all on horseback, the only legitimate mode of travelling in California. One of our party was furnished with a letter of introduction to Captain Sutter from a gentleman in San Francisco ; but we soon found such formality quite unnecessary with him, as he quickly manifested in himself the character of a perfect and most courteous gentleman of the old European military school ; possessed of all its politeness, ease, and dignity, without its usual hauteur. He had just returned from a tour among the different " Rancherias" of Indians in the mountains, and appointed a " talk" with them, to be held in a few days, and which he invited us to attend. He gave us much interesting information about the Indians in the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin.—When he first settled in California, he had much trouble with them, but he adopted, and has pursued steadily, from the first, a policy of peace, combined with the requisite firmness and occasional severity. Thus he had obtained all-powerful influence with them, and was enabled to avail himself of their la-

bour for moderate remuneration. Now all was changed; the late emigrants across the mountains, and especially from Oregon, had commenced a war of extermination upon them, shooting them down like wolves, men, women, and children, wherever they could find them. Some of the Indians were undoubtedly bad, and needed punishment, but generally the whites were the aggressors; and, as a matter of course, the Indians retaliated whenever opportunities occurred: and, in this way, several unarmed, or careless Oregonians had become, in turn, their victims. Thus has been renewed in California that war of extermination against the aborigines, commenced in effect at the landing of Columbus, and continued to this day, gradually and surely tending to the final and utter extinction of the race. And never has this policy proved so injurious to the interests of the whites, as in California.

The profitable trade with them in exchange for their gold dust is entirely at an end. Their labour once very useful, and in fact indispensable in a country where no other species of labourers were to be obtained at any price, and which might now be rendered of immense value by pursuing a judicious policy, has been utterly sacrificed by this extensive system of indiscriminate revenge.

Bidding farewell to this extraordinary pioneer in the New World on the Pacific, we again took up our line of march for the *diggings*. The prairie now

became rolling and gradually ascending, indicating our nearer approach to the mountains of the *gold region*. At sunset we called a halt, and leaving our waggons in close proximity, untackled the weary cattle to graze at freedom on the surrounding herbage, carefully staking our horses for a similar purpose for the night.

For the latter process there is a right way and a wrong way, or rather many wrong ways, as is the case with all the doings of that wise and conceited animal called man ;—the ladies need not indulge in any innocent exultation at this remark, for we use the term in its generic sense. The stake, then, twelve or eighteen inches in length, must be driven in the ground at an angle of forty-five degrees, and close down, with a hook or nub on the end, so that the *lariat* or rope cannot extract it while the horse is feeding.

Our encampment this night was in a hollow between two rolling hills, called *green spring*, as the little mud-hole so denominated was in the midst of a patch of greener or more abundant grass than usual. We had much difficulty in finding enough of wood for cooking purposes, but finally succeeded in picking up sufficient from the remains of other camp fires. Having accomplished a distance of twenty miles, we fastened our cattle up to the wheels of the waggons to prevent their straying, and after a hearty supper were quickly fast asleep

in our blankets ; but the night was cold, and we felt the want of our camp fires on the Sacramento.

At daylight we resumed our journey, and proceeding three miles, stopped by another spring, and enjoyed our breakfast on the green grass, and in the brisk morning air, and with keen appetites.

Towards noon of this day we reached a log house, which is a general stopping-place on this route to the mountains. A *blue tent* was first pitched here, and the spot has been called by that appellation ever since. A small stream of pure water trickles by the door down into the adjoining meadow. The house is owned and occupied by a western farmer with his family. He keeps a bar and small shop, and the wife provides meals for those who call for them. This man arrived in California before the gold discoveries, and acquiring the language of the Indians, he pursued a friendly policy towards them, employed them to dig gold for him, superintending them in person, and is said to have acquired in this, and in other ways, some 200,000 dollars.

While here, some twenty warriors came in from a neighbouring *rancheria*, following each other in regular Indian file across the hill side. These were a part of one of the numerous small tribes of California Indians called "Diggers." This name they have received as characteristic of their habits, either of digging large holes in the ground for sanitary purposes, called *sweat houses*, or from their custom

of digging and eating various kinds of roots. They also eat a species of grass and wild clover when prompted by hunger ; their principal food, however, consists of acorns, and preparations from them. These are very abundant, and we found them quite sweet and palatable. This race of Indians is probably inferior to all others on the continent. Many of them are diminutive in stature, but they do not lack muscular strength, and we saw some who were tall and well-formed. These were all partially clad in every kind of *toggery* obtained at the trading posts, and armed with short bows, lined very skilfully with raw hide, hard as bone, and capable of propelling their arrows with great force and precision. The Indians of the mountains are not so well clothed, and we saw many entirely naked. Their complexion is a dark mahogany, or often nearly black, their faces round or square, with features approximating nearer to the African than the Indian. Wide enormous mouth, noses nearly flat, and hair straight and black, and coarse as that of a horse's mane, but without gloss, growing often over their low foreheads, and small, gleaming eyes, complete the description of these revolting specimens of humanity. Possessed of mean, treacherous and cowardly, traits of character, and most thievish propensities, they are probably the worst subjects for the moulding hand of civilization. Yet Captain Sutter's judicious policy has accomplished wonders among large numbers of them, which consisting of

several tribes, are known as Sutter's Indians. The great mass of them, known as wild Indians, exist entirely in the mountains, and about the head waters of the Sacramento.

One of the party at the Blue Tent displayed about a quarter of an ounce of gold dust tied up in a rag, for which he wanted to trade, and soon struck a bargain with one of our party for a white shirt, or *comisa blanca*, using the Spanish language to denominate all things before unknown to them. While producing this from our waggon, the *Alcalde* of their tribe came up, and with a look of hatred and a few Indian words, stopped the trade. This fellow was tall and well-formed, with better features and lighter complexion, but a demoniac countenance. He wore a red Mexican sash as a symbol of his authority, and of which he was extremely vain. No doubt he told his warriors we were cheating them, for they displayed many revengeful symptoms.

After obtaining some refreshment here we continued our journey, and in passing over the rolling prairies and hills, were amazed and delighted with the great variety and beauty of the wild flowers, exceeding all we had ever beheld in garden or green-house. On the level prairies they usually grow in distinct fields or patches of each kind of flower, but here in the wild profusion of Paradise, ere blessed with Eve's more nurturing care, were white, blue, and violet, the orange and lemon fading

into the liquid hue of the amber, the Tyrian purple and soft lilac, the deep crimson, bright scarlet, and modest pink, blended beautifully with the verdant grass, and filling the air with their delightful fragrance. We recognised the wild narcissus, tulip and hyacinth, and a trumpet-shaped lilac flower, with leaves alternately rounded, or oval and pointed, with a velvet streak of deep purple in the centre of each. Filling our hatbands with these gorgeous plumes, we looked like fitting followers of Fra Diavolo, and wished that wives, mothers, and sisters were there to see.

CHAPTER XVII.

California Mountains. Views from their Summits. Lovely Mountain Valley. Picturesque Camp. California Quail. Mare. Antelope. Black Tail Deer. Weber's Creek. Williams's Rancho. Arrival at Culoma Mills.

LEAVING the forks of the road where it diverges towards the first *diggings*, at Mormon Islands on the American River, the rolling prairie which we had hitherto traversed, now gradually broke into steep hills, covered only with grass or occasional rocks near the top. The toiling oxen, with patient steps, pursued their weary way; and the scene was rendered more picturesque by our straggling

train of teams and waggon, horse and foot, alternately climbing or descending the hills.

We passed on our journey many travellers to the mines from all parts of the world—some shouldering heavy burdens of provisions and clothing, and all with a gold-washer or ginging-pan of some kind or other. Frequently we saw these poor fellows, exhausted with heat and fatigue, lying in forlorn groups in some welcome shade, or sharing their hard bread and jerked beef. These were, however, just the men for the gold regions of California, having, under monarchical governments, been accustomed to dig or starve, or *generally* both, while here it was only dig or die, and *sometimes* both.

We also met many diggers returning from the mines, ill or feeble, disappointed or satisfied with their pile of dust. Many were leaving because the waters were too high; others going to other diggings, or in quest of fresh provisions, or medical aid to cure them from the scurvy or the fever. From all we received the most contradictory accounts—some stating that the gold was abundant, and good health prevailing at the mines, and others exactly the reverse.

As we approached the mountains, the scenery became more diversified. The small valleys lying at the base of the hills, and the gently-sloping declivities were covered with beautiful groves of white and live oak, resembling in their clear, open vistas,

the seeming regularity of extensive orchards. This white oak appears to be altogether inferior to our noble tree and fine timber of that species. It is here low, scraggy, and with wide-spreading-branches, the largest of which often were snapped asunder, indicating a soft and brittle wood, which, on trial, we found to be the case. The tree here called live oak is, also, very different from that of our forests. Evidently an evergreen oak, it is short in the stem and covered with many small branches, but less spreading than those of the white oak.

Passing one of these little flocks among the hills, we espied a deserted waggon full of valuable merchandise. Wondering at this, we turned aside to ascertain the cause, and found a piece of paper on the waggon tongue, on which was legibly but rudely written, "Will some kind person stay by my waggon, I am in distress, looking for my oxen. Please do not take anything, for I am poor, and the property is not mine." The simplicity of the appeal seemed to have been quite effective, for all appeared unmolested; and one after another of our party remained with it as we came up, until the last comer entrusted his charge to some new arrival.

Early on the morning of this day, two of our number went up a ravine where was a little stream, for the purpose of "prospecting for gold," which is the term applied in the diggings for gold-hunting, or seeking new and richer deposits. They, however, returned unsuccessful, as the stream at the

point indicated was too high. The gentleman who accompanied them on this detour affords, in his own person, a striking instance of successful American enterprise. A native of Vermont, and educated in one of the colleges of that State, he acquired the profession of the law and removed to Mississippi, where, after raising and educating a family of sons and daughters, his health declined, and he resolved to emigrate to Oregon or California. His friends and relatives opposed his resolution, declaring his constitution incapable of sustaining him in so great an undertaking; but the power of a high-toned and vigorous intellect in a weak frame has often accomplished more than an ill-directed physical energy. With two sons he took his way across the prairies, each provided with a good ox team, axe, and rifle. Arriving in California two years ago, in the full vigour of restored health, he has acquired a fortune, being part proprietor of the Culoma saw-mill and other property. One of his sons was driving the team, and the other attending mill; and they had not heard from home for eighteen months previous to the establishment of the Pacific mail steamers.

We were now at the middle of our second day's journey, fairly across the valley of the Sacramento and in the California mountains. Turning to gaze upon the prospect before us, we beheld at our feet as if displayed upon a map, the whole of this beautiful valley, its broad and winding river flashing in

distant sunlight, while we were in shade. In the north, the clear Rio Americano rolled its tributary waters, and on the west, the horizon was bounded by the coast range of hills, with Monte Diablo still conspicuous in the sun. Resuming our journey, the blue mountains and alternate valleys of the California range were now before us, while at a distance of seventy or eighty miles, uprose the snow crowned peaks of the Sierra Nevada, glittering like burnished silver in the sun, or lost to view amidst the purple clouds. Continuing our ascent, we found the mountains or rather succession of mountains broken in every direction by valleys, ravines and gulches, as the smaller ravines are here denominated. Thus there is a continual succession of mountain and valley, making the ascent gradual and much less laborious.

In the afternoon of this day, we entered a lovely little valley in the mountains, where we found plenty of wood for fuel and tent poles, and a clear little stream of water near at hand. Having travelled sixteen miles, we resolved to encamp early to afford our cattle a good rest, for the hardest part of the road was yet to be traversed, and we accordingly called a halt at this inviting spot.

Our camp here was picturesque in the extreme: besides white oak, live oak and other trees, the tall fir was pointing his top to the clouds all around us, while up the slope of the opposite hill was a beautiful clear lawn, commencing from the meandering

brooklet at its base. With the waggons drawn in an angle, our tent was pitched near them, between two large fir trees, and close at hand our camp fire was blazing and crackling over a great bed of live coals, with a large old tree for a back log. The preparations for dinner and supper being completed, we all fell to with appetites of the California battalion, and seated, some on ox yokes, some on saddles, some on waggon tongues, and some on the ground, we did "equal and exact justice" to fried pork, boiled beans, hasty slap-jacks, and coffee which to our mind outvied all the most brilliant results of Parisian skill: while on the margin of the brook our cattle were industriously grazing their fill. As darkness fell upon mountain and valley, we secured our oxen to the waggons, and staked our horses in camp; then after repose and pleasant converse about "the girls we left behind us," we laid down to sleep under tent, tent-fly and waggons, keeping no watch, but leaving our horses and cattle to the care of a large Newfoundland dog, certain that the contemptible race of thievish Indians would not venture to molest them.

Resuming our toilsome progress the following morning, the mountains now became more steep and rugged, so that sometimes it was with much difficulty we could prevent our heavily-laden waggons from overturning. It was an amusing spectacle to see three or four of us hold on with might and main, down a steep, sidling declivity, or putting our

shoulders to the wheel, aid poor Rosbuck and Bright in rolling the heavy budget out of the deep *gulches*, whence often unaided they could not budge it.

We now began to see many California quail, but had no time to bag any of them. They are smaller than our quail, and both their form and plumage bear some resemblance to the dove. Rabbits of very large size and probably the same species as the English hare, were quite numerous among the underwood, and on the previous day we saw several of the fleet and graceful antelope feeding among the green hills. As these animals are said to be attracted by red colours, two of our party in red shirts endeavoured to approach them to get a shot; for a little time the issue seemed doubtful, but suddenly snuffing the air, they bounded away with the fleetness of the wind. These beautiful creatures seem to belong to the society of friends among animals in California, for they always wear drab coats, and preserve perpetual peace in their roamings among the hills.

Crossing a deep ravine to-day, we heard the crack of a rifle twice repeated, and soon emerging from the gorge appeared a bronze and sturdy old hunter, with a large red deer bereft of head and hoofs, slung over his shoulders. His waggon was waiting in the road, and setting down his heavy rifle with the force of a small tree, he tumbled his prize into the waggon, declaring with an oath that

"these ~~were~~ Californy deare was the hardest to kill he ever seen. Shoot'em twice, and then they won't die till you knife 'em." They are darker in colour than our common red deer, larger, and possessed of greater strength and fleetness, as well as tenacity of life. We saw them on every mountain top, leaping over rocks, crags, and brushwood, with incredible bounds. For expert hunters, there can be no finer game than the black-tailed deer of California.

As we penetrated farther up into the mountains they became more precipitous and difficult, and our road wound through almost impenetrable thickets which, interspersed with rocks, clothed the rugged hills to their apex.

Crossing Weber's* Creek, we gazed with interest into the deep canon from which it emerges, for here Mr. Weber, an old settler in the country, obtained large quantities of gold last season with the aid his friendly Indians, and is now said to possess a *fanega* of gold dust, which is nearly two bushels. The occupant of the log cabin at this creek, obtained 2500 dollars from it, near his house the past winter.

Our previous impressions of the volcanic structure of California now became forcibly renewed. Many of these detached mountains bear distinctly the appearance of having once been volcanoes, or thrown up by volcanic action, and their broken and irregular forms and sterile aspect, further confirm this opinion. The lines of deep quartz rock and soil of

bright red sand clay, characteristic of this wonderful gold region, now surrounded us on every side, and we began to look forward to the speedy termination of our journey.

Towards noon we reached Williams's Rancho in the mountains. The owner of it has a *corral* for stray horses, and as he is very obliging and popular, his house is well known and frequented by his friends in these "*diggings*."

Our frequent inquiries from returning miners elicited information that the waters were very high and yet rising on the forks, as the past winter was the most severe ever known here, snows four feet deep having fallen in the mountains, and some even on the coast—an occurrence not before known in the history of California. The old Californian or Spanish inhabitants charge the Americans with being the cause of this phenomenon, and the Indians in the valley believe so also, never having seen snow before, and not knowing what it was.

Commencing now our last descent of some two or three miles, we entered the valley, through a deep gorge out of which the South Fork of the American River makes its way. Winding down the precipitous road we soon caught sight of tents like white specks among the trees, and in due time found ourselves in Saw Mill valley, now known as Marshall's or "Culoma Mills," where the gold discoveries were first made in 1848. The road to

these mills was far better than we expected. Such had been the rush of adventurers, that it is a hard beaten track, and better than most mountain roads in the United States. Our Nantucket friends now filed off to the borders of the stream above the village, but we continued on with our waggon and halted in the midst of the valley, surrounded by tents, and log and frame houses and stores. Our oxen were soon untackled, and our load of 1800 lbs. deposited on the ground under a tree, for all of which service of transportation fifty miles, we paid our friend Harrison, the Oregon boy, 360 dollars.

Thus, on the 12th of April, had we terminated our trip of six thousand miles, in sixty-seven days, of which we had only employed thirty-six days in actual travel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Culoma Valley. South Fork. Mill Race and first Gold Discoveries. Trading with the Miners. Old Greenwood and his Sons. A War Party, and Indian Scalp. Sunday in the Valley. Indian Carouse.

THE "Saw Mill," or Culoma Valley, is about three or four miles in circumference, surrounded on all sides by high mountain peaks, covered with fir trees and detached rocks. The bright red sandy clay soil is broken into *gulches* and ravines, which are filled with water during the rainy season. The

whole of this formation is believed to contain gold, but thus far researches have only been made in the *gulches* among the rocks. A silver mine believed to be of considerable value, has been found near this valley, but it is neglected for the gold. The level basin of the valley is of common yellow sand and pebble, entirely different from the composition of the mountains, and is covered only with a sprinkling of poverty grass.

Entering by a *canon* of the mountain on the south-east, the South Fork pursues its way on one side of the valley, at the base of the high peak separating the South from the Middle Fork, and departs through another and deeper *canon* at the north-west. It is a perfect mountain torrent twenty to fifty yards wide, thundering over its rocky bed with noisy violence at the rate of five or six miles per hour. A strong rope stretched across the stream where it is deeper and not so rapid, enables a large scow to be run across, as a ferry boat. On that side of the fork the valley is soon hemmed in by the mountain, and only a few tents were scattered at its foot, but in the western and southern portion of the valley, were about fifty frame and log houses, and as many tents, which were weekly becoming more numerous.

At the north or lower end of this beautiful and romantic valley, is situated the famous saw mill erected by direction of Captain Sutter. Its ma-

chinery is of the most common kind adapted to water power, erected under an open shed over the race; and though it is called a slow mill, the net profit of a full day's work at the then price of lumber at the mill, (400 dollars per thousand,) was 1000 dollars per day. This valuable property now belongs to Mr. Marshall and a gentleman associated with him to whom we have before alluded. Mr. Marshall is a millwright and a native of New Jersey, the good old "banner state" of the Revolution. We saw him and conversed with him in relation to his discovery of the gold. The race is cut through a portion of the original bed of the stream, below its banks and opposite to a bend or curve which it makes towards the mountain. He pointed out to us the particular location of the first discoveries. This is some fifty yards below the mill where a large fir tree extends across the race. He stated that they threw up a good deal of gold mixed with the sand and clay before they seriously examined it, or ascertained its certain character. The loose nature of this sandy soil, required both sides of the race to be lined with heavy plank to prevent it from again filling up.

On the margin of the race and just below the mill, we pitched our tent under the shade of a scrub oak. We fixed upon this spot in the midst of the sand and dust of the settlement, as it was the best place to traffic and dispose of our merchandise and surplus articles; for like nearly all

California adventurers we had long since r~~ed~~ our great error in bringing so much baggage with us, and determined to "*tote*" it about no longer. One of our party had brought merchandise, but though the remainder had come only for the purpose of gold digging, and were of course anxious to proceed in their enterprise, yet it was impossible either to store the baggage or carry it with us.

Taking our tent-fly we erected it in front of the tent, and placing a barrel under each of its four corners, laid boards upon them, thus having on each side a convenient counter for the display of our articles. To those who are unacquainted with camp equipage, we may explain that the tent-fly is a second roof usually erected over the tent. The one now in use we had made ourselves during our voyage, from materials obtained in Panama. Having completed these preliminary arrangements we retired to rest, there being just sufficient room for that purpose, between the piles of baggage arranged around the inside of the tent. Here we were soon lulled to repose by the babbling stream and steady music of the mill.

The following morning we awoke at daylight quite chilled by the cold of the night, though furnished with warm clothing and several blankets, and by nine o'clock the heat of the sun was oppressive. As three dollars a meal was too expensive, and no fresh meat was to be obtained at any price,

we fried our own pork as usual, and took breakfast on the counter.

Then arranging our articles, we prepared for trade, and were soon visited by groups of diggers or others, to purchase or look on. Ascertaining the current prices, we disposed of powder at 16 dollars per pound; percussion caps 2 dollars per hundred, or for water-proof, 8 dollars per quarter box; small belt pistols 32 dollars to 48 dollars per brace; a rifle at 100 dollars; clasp, sheath, and bowie knives, 8 dollars, 10 dollars, and 16 dollars; and cigars at 75 cents to 1 dollar 25 cents per dozen. Miners were always willing to pay these prices for articles which they wanted; but otherwise they would not take them at any price; owing to the difficulty of carrying weight over the mountains and canons. On some days, therefore, we made good progress in this business, and at others accomplished nothing. There were a few of the friendly Indians in the valley, but they refused to traffic with us for reasons before quoted; and our articles adapted only to their use were consequently valueless.

The abundance of the gold dust and lumps in the possession of the miners was most wonderful. A fellow clad in greasy deer skin pants, and hunting shirt, the *usual dress* of the *diggers*, would purchase some article for *an ounce or half ounce*, and producing from the folds of a sash or handkerchief around him, an old deer skin pouch, untie the

coarse string and turn out the dust into our scales. In this clumsy process more or less gold was spilled on the paper under the scales, and unless it was a considerable quantity, they generally refuse to receive it back ; saying, " there's plenty more where that comes from."

Among the most conspicuous characters in the valley, were Old Greenwood and his sons. The former is a famous backwoodsman and trapper in the Rocky Mountains, who has pioneered many a party of emigrants to the head waters flowing to the Pacific. On one of these expeditions his eye sight was considerably impaired in crossing the desert, and his wife, who was of the brave tribe of Crow Indians, prevailed upon him to accompany her to St. Louis for surgical aid, paddling the canoe herself down the Yellow Stone and Missouri Rivers, several thousand miles to that city. After recovering his sight, she prevailed upon him to settle on a farm in Missouri, where they remained until two of his sons eloped, each with a Western girl, when the whole family finally penetrated to California, except one of the son's wives, who died on the way. The mother had died before these events occurred. We saw five of his sons, three of whom were dark-skinned, black-eyed boys, one a small, active little fellow, named Governor Boggs, especially attracted our notice. The others were John Greenwood and Davy Crockett, or rather "Crockett," the soubriquet by which he was always

called. The former is of a deep brunette complexion, with a tall, robust frame, regular and stern features, clear dark eyes, and a luxuriant head of hair, black as a crow; the latter displays a lithe and muscular frame, with blue eyes and Saxon complexion; and both are admirable specimens of the daring and reckless mountain men.

Hearing the sounds of the violin from the old man's cabin, which was near our tent, we went to the door, and looked in. This was an enclosure of upright logs, or slabs, about ten feet by fifteen, and roofed by the same. In one corner of the ground-floor, seated on a saddle, was John Greenwood, fiddling away in first-rate style, for two or three of his friends; opposite stood a rude cot, which they had made for the old man, while the other two corners contained the ever-present rifle, and two or three rough shelves, filled with bottles of liquor and sundry drinking-cups of every shape and variety, for old Greenwood did not often indulge in Adam's ale.

The day after our arrival in the valley, a war party of ten or twelve men, including the two Greenwoods, went out, well-mounted, to attack a neighbouring "rancheria" of Indians, and revenge the murder of two Oregon men by some of the latter. As they galloped away from old Greenwood's cabin, which was the general rendezvous on such occasions, he shouted, "Be sure, boys, and bring me a squaw;" and one of our party

jocosely added, "Bring *me* a scalp." The following morning we heard the old man storming around his cabin, bare-headed as he always was, cursing and swearing like a madman. Inquiring the cause, he replied, "They say the Injuns have killed my son, but it's a lie, a d——d infernal lie; they can't kill John Greenwood; he's a brave boy—they can't kill him, I say. I've lived among Injuns all my life; I know the varmints, and they know me; shot over a hundred of them in my time—shot ten in this valley, and aint done with the bloody villains yet." And the old man was right this time, at least; for soon after, the whole party rode in— young Greenwood, as he passed our tent, unloosing from his saddle-bow an Indian scalp, the long, black, bristly hair clotted with blood, and tied with a leather string, by which he flung it to us. Disgusted with the spectacle, we quickly threw it in the race, and turning to inquire as to the result of the expedition, ascertained that they had killed four, made several prisoners, burnt the "rancheria," and carried off some gold dust."

The following morning, whilst one of our number cocked breakfast, we went in different directions through the valley and up the mountains, in search of our poney, Miss Jenny Lind, which had been lost or stolen for thirty-six hours or more. The ascent was toilsome, but the morning was delightful, and from the summit we beheld the beautiful vallies and mountains in every direction, af-

for a varied and extensive prospect. We each returned to camp quite unsuccessful, and at once entered into treaty with young Governor Boggs, who said he could find Jenny for half an ounce; but requiring payment in advance, we declined the bargain, and recovered her the following day by the aid of an Indian vaquero.

Sunday happened to pass off quietly, as but few miners came into the valley, and the traders' stores, open part of the day, were not frequented. Observing our American customs, we discontinued our employments, and learning that a Methodist meeting would be held in an unfinished house, we attended it, and were surprised to find there some twenty persons, mostly new comers, including four females. Two of these were young, dressed in gay, western style, with some pretensions to beauty; and another, was a middle-aged person, in mourning, accompanied by a little girl. At allusions made by the worshippers to some scenes, the soft-hearted sex resorted to their favourite refreshment under such circumstances—the one with the little girl especially crying most bitterly.

At night, the Indians in the valley, following the example of some who pretend to civilisation at home, selected Sunday night for a grand carouse, and were howling with the excitement of intoxication till a late hour. The signal fires of surrounding hostile tribes had been burning some nights previous on the mountains; and they had threat-

ened vengeance on Greenwood, whose cabin was close to our tent. We, therefore, loaded our fire-arms, and slept with them in reach of our hands. After some hours, we were suddenly aroused by the yells of the Indians, and a bright light shining through our tent roof. We instantly recollected their frolic, and presumed they were making a *night* of it; but one of our party, who had boasted much of how he would fight the "Ingines," seized his revolver, and creeping out of his blankets, with much care and trepidation, lifted the corner of the tent door, to discover the dread enemy. We enjoyed a hearty laugh at his expense, and quickly relapsed into the arms of Morpheus.

CHAPTER XIX.

Digging Gold. Description of the Bars. Wet and Dry Diggings.
Canons. Scenes among the Miners. Life in the Gold Regions.
Characters. Lynch Law.

THE sudden change from a life of vigorous exercise to the inactivity of the camp, and the influence of food consisting of salt provisions only, now began to be felt by all. While part remained, therefore, in charge of the trading, we shouldered our shovels, buckets, and machine, and proceeded to the lower bar on the South Fork, to try our hands at digging and washing out gold. The waters were so high

that not many miners were employed on the bars here, though there were more on the Middle and North Forks. The great rush at that time was to the diggings more recently discovered on the Stanislaus and other tributaries of the San Joaquin, where there were about eight thousand miners, besides traders, &c. These discoveries had excited much attention on account of the large lumps of gold found there, but the more experienced miners were already returning to the branches of the Sacramento.

Arriving at the bar, the scene presented to us was new indeed, and not more extraordinary than impressive. Some with long-handled shovels delved among clumps of bushes, or by the side of large rocks, never raising their eyes for an instant; others with pick and shovel worked among stone and gravel, or with trowels searched under banks and roots of trees, where, if rewarded with small lumps of gold, the eye shone brighter for an instant, when the search was immediately and more ardently resumed. At the edge of the stream, or knee deep and waist deep in water, as cold as melted ice and snow could make it, some were washing gold with tin pans or the common cradle rocker, while the rays of the sun were pouring down on their heads, with an intensity exceeding anything we ever experienced at home, though it was but the middle of April.

The thirst for gold and the labour of acquisition

overruled all else, and totally absorbed every faculty. Complete silence reigned among the miners; they addressed not a word to each other, and seemed averse to all conversation. All the sympathies of our common humanity, all the finer and nobler attributes of our nature seemed lost, buried beneath the soil they were eagerly delving, or swept away with the rushing waters that revealed the shining treasure.

The "placer" or bar, is simply the higher portion of the sandy and rocky bed of the stream; which, during the seasons of high water, is covered with the rushing torrent, but was now partially or entirely exposed. This is covered with large stones and rocks, or on the smooth sand with clumps of stunted bushes or trees. Selecting a spot, we inquired of those nearest whether any other diggers claimed a prior possession, and such not being the case, we went to work. First fixing our machine firmly at the edge of the stream, we dug, and carried down a pile of the earth to be washed; and when sufficient was collected, one filled the machine with the earth and kept it in motion, while the other supplied it with water. Getting but a small quantity of gold in that spot, we waded through a little inlet to another part of the bar nearer the stream, and our labours not being well rewarded here, we again shifted our position nearer the other miners. There we fixed upon the edge of a bank, where the ground had been broken by

an old miner, but soon deserted. Digging through about a foot of sand and stones which we rejected, we came to a clay deposit mixed with sand ; this we filled the buckets with, and carried to the machine. The upper or sandy layer contains no gold, but it is caused by its specific gravity and the action of the water to sift through this into the clay, where it is found until the blue clay or granite formation is reached, which in these diggings is generally three to four feet ; but in some of the others the miners dig ten to fifteen feet. This we were told was the fact in some parts of the Yuba diggings, and the forks of the San Joaquin.

It was now mid-day, and the heat of the sun was quite intolerable to all but salamanders ; and finding in our machines about four dollars value of gold to twenty buckets of earth, we discontinued our labours for that day.

It is to be remembered, however, that this was by no means what is considered rich earth, which can only be got at when the streams are lowest, and the bars fully exposed. From what we ourselves saw, and from the concurrent testimony of all the miners of the previous summer, there can be no doubt that they obtain three ounces of gold per day, and upwards, during the season of low waters. While on this bar we carefully noticed the operations of experienced diggers and miners, and were soon convinced of the superior utility of the pan and

the common wooden rocker, for washing gold in California.

The rocker is simply a wooden cradle, the same as a child's cradle, except that the back rocker is higher than the front one, thus forming an inclined plain of the bottom, across which two or three wooden cleets are nailed a foot apart. Over the head of the cradle is a grating or tin plate perforated with holes ; on this the earth and water is thrown, while the cradle is rocked by a long handle at the side, like a lever, and the gold lodges on the bottom between the cleets, the mud and water escaping at the foot. We saw these rockers of different sizes, some quite small and tended only by one man, who first digging and carrying the earth to the rocker alternately supplied it, and then with one hand kept it in motion, while with a tin pan he poured the water in from the stream. Others required three men and some five, to dig and carry the earth and keep them at work. At the close of each day's work, the gold is removed, and there is no interruption for this purpose during the day. These rockers are light, easily constructed or repaired, are not effected in usefulness by the unevenness of the ground or soon worn out by use, and they can also be knocked to pieces, transferred from one mine to another and set up again.

The common tin pan is everywhere necessary and useful, and in some of the most inaccessible

bars in the deepest canons of the mountains, no other washer can be transported or used.

We had one of the best and most practical machines with us that had been invented, and though it answered as well as we anticipated, yet the majority of diggers preferred the rocker.

The bars like the one just described, are denominated the wet diggings, and are generally in the deep canons of the mountains. A canon is the narrow opening between two mountains, several hundred and sometimes a thousand feet in depth; rising some of them like perpendicular cliffs on either hand, as if torn asunder by a violent convulsion of Nature. Through these pour the rushing mountain torrents of the wet diggings of the gold regions of California.

Some of our party visited the dry diggings, which are the gulches and ravines of the sides of the mountains. The gold there obtained, is chiefly by washing the red clay with the pan in the pools of the ravines formed by the rainy season, or in some little mountain rivulet, often several hundred yards from the spot where the earth is obtained.

The crevices of the white-veined quartz rocks also furnished gold in lumps nearly pure or mixed with the quartz; and a good deal is extracted in this way by the common butcher or sailor's sheath knife, which is best for the purpose. Not near as much gold, however, is thus obtained, as has been generally supposed. The faces, hair, brows and

eye-lashes of the miners in the dry diggins, becomes continually plastered with the red clay in which they work and wash. India rubber aprons are some protection, but boots of that material soon cut on the rocks; and in fact a deer skin suit with fisherman's boots, furnish the best clothing a miner can possibly have.

Returning to camp, we renewed our trading, witnessing on some days most extraordinary illustrations of "Life in the Gold Regions." Miners were continually coming in from the different *diggins*, to expend a part, or all of their gold on what they term "a burst;" which is a constant revel, day and night for three or four days, and often a week at a time. Drinking brandy at half an ounce, and champagne at an ounce a bottle, as freely as water, they wandered and roved about from groggery to store, and from store to tent, wild with intoxication; brandishing bowie-knives in sport, or shooting with the rifle at any mark they fancied, with the ball often but half home, and the rammer in. Others would leap into the saddle, and yelling with excitement, gallop furiously in every direction, regardless of all obstacles, frequently being thrown, and nearly killed.

Profanity of the vilest description, oaths such as we never conceived could be uttered by human lips, incessantly filled the air, till Nature herself, awed into silence, withheld her echoes. Though accustomed to the common vice of swearing in the United

States, and even to hearing it from the lips of fashionable young gentlemen of respectable families, we doubt if they are aware how extensively their vocabulary, in this particular, may be increased.—Learned in boyhood, like the use of tobacco, for the sake of aping a premature manhood, both these vices would be wanting in their host of followers at maturer age, if it is true, as the giant of the British classical writers has said, that “*virtue* is the best proof of *understanding*.” Yet many indulge in them from mere habit, who are quite ready to assent to these opinions. Independent of the moral turpitude of the one, and the indecency and expensiveness of the other, we confess, as Americans, with a thrill of shame, to have forgotten sometimes, the opinion and the example of our revered and immortal Washington, in relation to these vices.—The deep disgust, however, experienced at the revolting profanity of life in the Gold Regions, we can never forget ; and thousands of our young countrymen who have gone there, will, doubtless, share in this opinion.

With some of these men, who appeared good-natured in their excesses, we ventured to remonstrate. We said, “This digging gold is toilsome and hard labour—why do you not try and keep some for a rainy day?” And their reply was, “Oh, we know where there’s plenty more, and when we want it we can dig it.”

As further proof of the general wastefulness of

the gold, we frequently saw miners lying in the dust helpless with intoxication, who, it was known, had hundreds of dollars in gold always upon their persons; and one man in particular, who had dug with his own hands, and obtained of Indians, some 23,000 dollars in gold, we saw in this condition two or three days, and he had now but about 7000 dollars remaining,

Old Greenwood's little boys, and others, came daily to our tent, sometimes twice or thrice, with gold dust tied up in the corners of their handkerchiefs, amounting each time to fractional parts of one, two, or three dollars, which they obtained by gathering and blowing or washing out the dust about the counters or doors of the traders and groggeries.

Among all the roving and reckless characters by whom we were surrounded, were two special curiosities, named Bill and Gus. Now, Bill and Gus had come over from the Middle Fork, for a particular, general, and universal "burst." Being well known *diggers*, they had not only plenty of the dust, but, when that was gone, they had abundant credit, both at the traders and groggeries. As bosom friends they were never apart; and with hearts softened by the fumes of liquor they loved all around them, attaching themselves as fixtures to our tent. This was annoying; but like many other things in California must be borne. Bill was wiry

as an Indian, and with his jet locks and furtive eyes, resembled one not a little; while Gus, with his sleek and rounded limbs, was like an elder uncle to him. One of our party, after being strongly solicited, sold Bill a bottle of French brandy, laid in for medical purposes at half an ounce, or eight dollars. He immediately insisted on our drinking with him; but on our refusing several times, he dashed it violently against a tree, thus throwing away his half ounce and his brandy both. In paying for something, he dropped a small lump of gold, worth two or three dollars, which we picked up and offered him. Without taking it, he looked at us with a comical mixture of amazement and ill-humour, and at length broke out with, "Well, stranger, you are a curiosity; I guess you haint been in *the diggins* long, and better keep that for a sample." Bill, finding one of our party to be a Philadelphian, at once gave him the soubriquet of "Old Philadelphia," and having learned a trade there fondly claimed a fellow townsman. They finally purchased a barrel of ale at three dollars per bottle, and sardines at a half ounce per box; and with a bottle under each arm, and glass in hand, went about forcing everybody to drink, finally arranging themselves under our tent-fly for a general evening entertainment.

Besides these characters, we also extended our acquaintance by the addition of several notorious individuals. One of these was a young man of

respectable family who boasted of his participation in the bloody and disgraceful riots in one of our cities, a few years ago, and displaying a hideous scar said, "I got that from an Irishman just as I was setting fire to the church." His physical development was extraordinary, and his youth and pleasant disposition make such a career more to be regretted.

One evening of the previous winter a party of these roystering mountain blades were indulging in the bottle, when one of them unperceived emptied his canteen of pure alcohol on the head of another who was a famous bully, and seizing the candle, communicated the flame at the same moment. "Man on fire, man on fire, put him out, put him out," was the universal shout; and put him out they did with a vengeance, many embracing that opportunity to pay off old scores, and at the same time most effectually curing him of his bullying propensities. Among all these men are mingled not a few who have committed offences and crimes in the United States. We also met with a man of education, intelligence and wealth acquired in the gold regions, whom it was well known deliberately shot another last winter for a most trifling offence, killing him instantly. A jury was empannelled under the forms of lynch law, to try him, but they could not agree. Another was then empannelled and this time they acquitted him. His pale countenance and other signs, told, nevertheless, how

incessantly the gnawing worm of conscience was eating into his soul.

Under this same system of lynch law, a score of men were hung last winter in the mines for thefts and similar offences, and the relatives of the punished were sure to avenge their death, sooner or later. And yet there are not wanting men of moral character and religious profession, who defend the use of this infamous system in communities possessed of regular law and government. In California, indeed, its general application has been both necessary and useful; and since the less frequent resort to the extreme punishment of death, except only for murder, it has been more justly applied.

CHAPTER XX.

Indian Murders of Oregon men. Another War-Party. More Digging. Extremes of Heat and Cold. Diseases of the Miners. Scurvy. Separation of our party. Sacramento Fever. Supplies of Fresh Provisions impossible.

A FEW days before our arrival in the mines, five men from Oregon, named Robinson, Thompson, English, Johnson, and Wood, were murdered by Indians while engaged in gold digging. Having but one rifle, they imprudently left it in their tent. This the Indians, some thirty or forty in number, first secured, and then commenced their attack with bows and arrows. The Oregonians defended them-

selves some time, repeatedly driving the Indians with no other weapons than the stones they found on the *bar* where they were at work ; but upon reaching the edge of the *bar*, they were each time obliged again to retreat. At length three of them, stuck full of arrows, were exhausted with loss of blood, and overcome ; while the other two attempted to escape by crossing the fork, one succeeding in reaching the other side, but both finally meeting the fate of the others. One of the warriors of the tribe who participated in these murders was afterwards taken prisoner, and furnishing the above narration, his life was spared on condition that he should guide the whites to their *rancheria*.

Accordingly on the 16th of April, a war party was made up of about twenty young mountaineers, mostly Oregon men, and including also the young Greenwoods. We mounted, and equipped with the enormous gingling California spurs, they rode up to old Greenwoods for a review from the old man preparatory to starting. Each man carried besides his inseparable rifle, a long Spanish knife usually mounted with silver, and stuck in the folds of his deer-skin leggings ; and many were also provided with a brace of pistols or bowie knife, worn in the red Mexican sash around the waist. Old Greenwood shouted "mind the scalps and squaws for me, and be sure you bring 'em all in, boys," and away they went, at a thundering *lop* eager for revenge.

This day one of our party again tried the "*diggins*," using the pan, but with little success. Some obtained half an ounce, and occasionally an old miner an ounce a day.

This was discouraging for men who had left their homes and families, and the decencies of civilization, with the expectation of acquiring an adequate competency by the efforts of a single year. Crossing a continent, or sailing around it on two oceans, and penetrating to the California mountains, were not considered formidable undertakings by Americans for this purpose.

But day after day we saw parties filing down the mountains, and ending their voyages and journeys of six, ten, or seventeen thousand miles, filled with disgust and disappointment at the climate, the country, and inaccessible nature of the gold regions, to which thousands had been assured their vessels could sail, furnishing them with a home on board while they were engaged in gold digging on the shady banks of the beautiful rivers. Many of these avowed their determination to quit the country without delay, and we met one party of hardy boatmen from New York, many of whom, including their captain, avowed their intention to return home before their oxen were untackled.

Our own experience, which had now extended to a week's effort and observation, more and more confirmed us in the opinion, that the prospective or actual rewards of gold digging in California, were

too often totally and miserably inadequate to induce us to submit not only to the discomforts of a life greater than those of our horses and dogs at home, but to association with vice in its worst forms, combined with a certainty of impaired health, and corresponding risk to life itself.

Some of these we have alluded to ; but we found the extremes of heat and cold following each other in constant succession, especially severe. From nine o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon, the heat is intolerable, and this may account for the name given to the country, the word *California* being derived from two Spanish words, *caliente fornalla*, which mean *hot furnace* in plain English. The rays of the sun pour down into the valleys and *canons* through a dry, clear atmosphere, with unmitigated power, increased by reflection from the sides of the *canons* and mountains, and surface of the streams. The thermometer stood at 90 degrees Fahrenheit, at noon, in the shade of Culloma valley, on the 15th of April ; and, at night we slept cold in our tent, with our clothing on, and provided with abundant blankets. In the month of June and July the thermometer marks 109 to 112 in the shade, and the extremes of heat by day, and cold by night, are still greater in the *canons* than in the valleys. This we have explained in regard to heat ; and in regard to cold, it arises from the fact, that the waters of the different forks rise during the nights, often one or two feet with the snows of the

Sierra Nevada, melted by the heat of the previous day, on the mountain : and from the opposite cause the streams fall more or less during the day.

When the great supply from this source ceases in the summer months, the streams subside with astonishing rapidity ; the waters become warm, and often bitter, being highly impregnated with every kind of mineral, including gold, silver, platina, quicksilver and lead. Great quantities of fish frequently die near their sources, and all combined produce water of the most unwholesome and dangerous qualities for the human stomach, and which the old residents and miners have borne the use of only by boiling it before drinking. There are springs in the valleys, but in the canons where most of the gold is obtained, only the waters of these streams can be drank.

This produces the disease known as the Sacramento fever, resembling the congestive fever of the west, but more fatal. It is sometimes a slow, continual fever, which men go about with for months ; but in its more violent forms it is soon mortal, always affecting the brain, and in case of recovery leaving the mind impaired. The lung fever and rheumatism are brought on by working in the cold water, and stooping continually under the burning sun. Scurvy prevails to a great extent, caused by an exclusive diet of salt pork.

Though wild cattle are numerous in the valley of the Sacramento, and game abundant in the moun-

tains, labourers cannot be had to obtain the one, nor hunters the other, to any adequate extent. Wild cattle must be slaughtered where they are lassoed, for they cannot be driven from the valley to the mountains ; but even if this difficulty could be overcome, and the beef transported thither, the miners themselves will not carry it into the canons, because that would involve the necessity of frequent cessation of labour to go and return across the mountains.

No person who has seen or traversed the mountains and canons of the gold region of California, will wonder at the fact, that the miners do not emerge from or cross them oftener than they can help.

The best pack horses can only carry over from 150 to 200 pounds at a time, and frequently fall down and die, after a few trips, if they happen to be the least over laden. There is no grass in the mountains fit to sustain them, and the only way to accomplish this, would be to transport sufficient wheat, corn or oats for the purpose. Then if the trading posts in the mountains were supplied with fresh beef daily slaughtered, and carried twenty, thirty, or forty miles from the valley, the pack horses might be sent over with it into the various deep canons for sale to the miners.

But in the existing state of things in California, or any which is likely to arise so long as the gold is abundant, any one may see at a glance, that such a

system of supplies cannot be established ; or that if it were otherwise the enormous prices of food necessary to uphold it, would not be submitted to by the miners. We saw old miners continually departing for the *canons* of the *Middle* and *North Forks*, with one month's supply of provisions, consisting of 75 lbs. of pork and 75 lbs. of pilot bread, which were slung in sacks on each side of the horse, and for which they paid respectively at the rate of 150 dollars and 125 per hundred pounds. Now, although the prices of these articles were rapidly declining on the seaboard by reason of the immense importation, yet the price of fresh beef was 25 dollars per hundred pounds in San Francisco, and must further enhance there, the supply then being quite insufficient. Fresh provisions will therefore be consumed at the seaport and trading towns, and not in the mining region.

Sheep may be driven into the mountains, and have been in small numbers, but the only food approximating to fresh meat, at all available to keep in the *canons* after it is transported there, is jerked beef. This has been supplied in large quantities by the ports of the Pacific and from Buenos Ayres, but Americans will not use it. The humbug of preserved meats was already exploded, great quantities having spoiled.

As a farther illustration of this state of things, we knew a party of Oregon men, who, during the winter abandoned two hundred pounds of flour in

the mines rather than cross the mountains with it ; and in the spring, getting short of provisions in the *canon*, they offered other diggers eight dollars per pound for pork ; which being refused, they left the diggings nearly a month sooner than they intended. Finally, we saw among the miners who had been *long in the diggings* very few who had not been attacked with some of the diseases before mentioned ; and they were continually going about with faces or limbs tied up with scurvy or rheumatism, or walking shadows of the fever. Robust men who had tried the diggings a few weeks were constantly abandoning them or seeking some other part of the gold region in hopes of finding less hardship and lighter labour. These we fell in with on our return from the mountains, and across the valley of the Sacramento, in descending the river, and at San Francisco. There were French, Germans, and Americans, and among them a party of six sailors of the Pacific whalers, who were returning to go before the mast again, swearing sailor fashion, that they would rather go a whaling at half wages than dig gold any more.

With this experience and observation, and with these facts before our eyes, two of our party, of which the writer was one, resolved to abandon the gold region and return to San Francisco, until the healthier season of winter. Of the two remaining, the one who had brought saleable merchandise from New York obtained quarters in the

store-house of Mr. Bester, a highly respectable and popular merchant there, to whom he had a letter of introduction, and to whom we were all under obligation for many kind attentions. The other and last of our party of four, our hardy and robust little friend, from away down east in the State of Maine, was still so incurable a case of *yellow fever* as to resolve to stick to the *diggins*, any way. He had however knocked about the world a good deal, from the great lakes of America to the mouths of the Ganges, and had seen some "tall digging" in his time, too, as contractor on one of the great telegraph routes of the United States.

The succeeding day we met with the owner of a team of horses, the only one on the route to Sutter's Fort, and as he offered a good opportunity for two or three to accompany him, we resolved to avail ourselves of it on the following morning. We therefore, employed the interim in disposing of our surplus articles, and preparing for departure. While engaged in this, we narrowly escaped a grand explosion. The writer, in closing his trunk, which was of iron, set fire to a box of Lucifer matches imprudently left in it, and with a whiz-fiz the white smoke came pouring out of the crevices. A canister of gunpowder was in its neighbourhood; and if the trunk was left to itself, an explosion was certain to occur sooner or later. So there was but one course for him to adopt, and the trunk was accordingly unlocked and opened in the middle of a

pretty wide ring of lookers-on. Fortunately, Lucifer's intentions were unsuccessful that time, at all events ; and the fire of the enemy was drawn without burning powder. But we leave this warning to future travellers, never carry Lucifers and powder in the same trunk, but if you do, be careful not to mix them.

Completing these arrangements, it came to our turn after supper to wash the dishes, which we accomplished in this wise : a tin pail of hot water sat before us ; into this we pitched pans, plates, cups, spoons, pots, and knives and forks, and a big piece of soap ; stirring all around, we took each article out separately, and placed them all carefully in another pail, devoutly hoping they would be dry by morning ; and gloomily and desperately vowing we would never undertake that job again. Then we turned in for the night, dreaming of a smash among the crockery, and an extensive pursuit with a broomstick.

CHAPTER XXI.

Return to Sutter's Fort. An Oregon Farmer. Incidents by the Way. Peruvians, Chilians, and Peones. Indian Prisoners and Scalps. Shooting the Prisoners. Massacre of Whitman's Family in Oregon. Scenes and Incidents. Cayuse War. Old Tom McKey.

NEXT morning, at daylight, placing our trunks in one of several ox waggons, which were accompanied by a large party of disgusted adventurers, we mounted into a light waggon drawn by two little Oregon ponies, and commenced our return to Sutter's Fort.

Caleb Grover, the owner and driver of the team, was an Oregon farmer—a perfect specimen of his class; hearty, generous, and brave. Originally from the great State of New York, he had emigrated to the West, and finally penetrated to the noble territory of Oregon, where, three years ago, he had secured a section of the public lands, fenced and built upon the cleared portion of it, and raised several of the finest crops of wheat in the world. Leaving his farm in competent hands, he crossed the Sierra Nevada last winter with his team, on a temporary California adventure; and having thus secured some of the dust, he intended to return home soon, preferring his broad acres in the beautiful Willamette Valley, to the agricultural resources

of all California. On inquiry, we learned that he is brother to an esteemed member of Congress from his native State, the intelligence of whose election we communicated, much to his gratification and surprise, as the last letter which reached him from home some months previous, was more than two years old in date.

Travelling with him, besides the writer and his friend, Mr. S. L. Dewey, of New York, there was one of the many skilful and practical mechanics of the empire city, making four in all, and enabling us to travel at a pleasant rate.

As we left the beautiful Culloma Valley, we beheld the sun rising over the crest of the opposite mountains, to renew his daily course with increased intensity ; and anticipated with comparative pleasure the chill nor'-westers of the bay and ocean. In our progress down the mountains, we saw again every species of game, and obtained specimens of the California quail, by the aid of the fine double-barrel of our friend the machinist.

As we entered the narrow and deep gorge near Weber's Creek, we met a large party of Peruvians and Chilians, with their Indian *peones* or slaves, besides a considerable number of Mexicans from Sonora. All were mounted, and driving before them a number of pack horses, laden with the most comical admixture of *fixings*, guitars, and shovels, boots, blunderbusses, and picks, not forgetting the indispensable pans which were of the ancient kind,

known as calabashes, and fashioned by the cunning hand of Nature herself.

The Peruvians and Chilians dressed much in the Mexican costume, had intelligent countenances, and uniformly saluted us with politeness ; but the Sonorans were sulky, appearing like a vicious and ignorant race of people, their effeminate forms hidden under the everlasting *serapa*, dirty faces muffled in handkerchiefs, and the wide *sombrero* slouched over their scowling brows. Insatiable gamblers, they are ever ready to play *monte*, in bed, on horseback, on their dinner-plate, or father's corpse ; and when slain in heaps during the Mexican war, would no doubt often bet who would have the death-rattle the longest. In the practice of this vice, they maintain a nonchalance which gives them a great advantage over Americans or Europeans : winning or losing, it is all one to them, so long as they can play without ceasing. We remember seeing an American win at a monte table in San Francisco, about one thousand dollars in the space of ten minutes ; and although he was used to good luck, having broken a bank at Monterey, he was highly excited, saying, " talk of *placers*, why what better *placer* need a man want than you have got here in San Francisco." And truly a noble and proud boast would it be for our countrymen, not only that they are excelled by other nations in the practice of this ruinous vice, but that American citizens abandon to the *cunning* of inferior races,

amusements unworthy the intellect of freemen. Gambling adds nothing to the productive industry of a nation or the world, but is simply and plainly a contract or agreement by those who indulge in it to rob each other, leaving it to be accomplished by the chances of dice or cards, instead of pistols or daggers. Yet many persons of respectability indulge in it for mere amusement, forgetting, no doubt, the influence of their example upon others who play to their own ruin.

Following closely this motley group, came on foot a body of about sixty California Indians. Warriors and boys, squaws with *papooses* tied on boards and slung at the back, all were prisoners. Clustered together like sheep driven to the slaughter, they hastened through the gorge with uncertain steps, the perspiration rolling off their faces now pale with fright. Many of them were quite naked, and the men and boys especially looked more like ourang-outangs than human beings.

In flank and rear rode the war party, which had left the Culloma Valley two days previous. Every man's rifle lay across the pommel of his saddle, and dangling at both sides hung several reeking scalps. Among them was a dashing mountaineer named John Ross, who had two scalps for his share, and sticking in his sash was the red-sheathed bowie knife, which the writer had sold him a few days previous for an ounce of gold dust. Used previously to sever the rinds of pork, or shovel in

rice and frijoles, it had now been "wool gathering," or collecting wigs for old Greenwood's fancy stores.

"Well done, boys," shouted Grover, "you have given it to them this time; now, what's the news?" In reply to this inquiry, we learned that the captured Indian had led them the night before, according to promise, to their *rancheria*, on Weber's Creek, where some of them showing flight, and others attempting escape, they were fired upon, and some twenty to thirty were killed. Their chief fought until shot the third time, rising each time to his knees and discharging his arrows, Ross finally killing, cutting off his head, and scalping him. Their *rancheria* was then searched and burned; the Indians delivering up the papers of the Oregon men obtained at the time of their murder, and confessing that they had afterwards burned their bodies to ashes on the mountain.

The subsequent facts were related to the writer by his highly-esteemed friend, Mr. Donald Grant, a native of bonnie Scotland, who was one of our party to the mines, and an eye-witness to the scene; not having left on his return to San Francisco till the following day.

Arriving in the Culloma Valley with their prisoners, the mountaineers and miners had a grand revel and jollification to celebrate their achievement. During the day most of the prisoners were released, but a few squaws and seven warriors were retained. The latter were questioned and examined relative

to their participation in the murder of the Oregonians. Nothing being elicited to prove their guilt, it was nevertheless determined that they should die; because being bad looking and strong warriors, it was believed they were participators in the murders. Accordingly the consumption of champagne and brandy continued till sunset. At that hour the seven Indians were brought forth, and knowing well their fate, one of them put up his hand as a signal, and all leaped along the valley in rapid flight. Quick as thought the rifles began to crack in every direction, while old Greenwood raving around his cabin remonstrated at the deed, tossed his arms aloft with violent denunciation; and stooping down, gathered the dust in his palms, and sprinkled it on his head, swearing he was innocent of their blood. Meantime John Greenwood stood beside the old man in stoic silence, too brave to participate in the massacre, but too much of a crow to utter his disapproval. But frantic with excitement the others thought only of revenge, and the balls whistling in every direction, laid five of the warriors dead in the valley, and mortally wounded another, only one escaping unscathed. The dying rays of the sun deserting the bloody scene, yet lingered on the mountain top, and the smoke of the discharge rolled in thick volume, like a pall over the corpses of the slain, while that solitary warrior turned from his distant height, to gaze after his companions, a moment in vain. But his heart quivered with vengeance, and the thin white locks

of the old man in the valley, still mingled with the grey twilight, like the sackcloth and ashes of despair.

And this is what they call fighting the Indians ! A few days before only, we saw a young mountaineer, wild with rage, threaten the life of an American who had ventured to suggest, that the murders committed by these Indians were provoked by many previous murders by the whites, and that they should be avenged by the death of the *guilty* among the Indians, and not by an *indiscriminate* slaughter.

“What courage is displayed by such a warfare as this, what honour is to be gained in it, and why have so many of your Oregon men shot down scores of Indians like wolves?”—we enquired as we pursued our journey with Mr. Grover.

He at once referred to the massacre of the Rev. Mr. Whitman and family in Oregon, by the Cayuse Indians in the autumn of 1847. Mr. Whitman was a Protestant missionary, who besides his religious duties had established a fort and trading post, and employed large numbers of Indians and emigrants in agriculture. To these Cayuse Indians, who are some of them good farmers, he had taught the use of many modern implements besides mental and moral improvement ; and to the newly arrived and exhausted emigrants, his house was an asylum of rest ; while to the poor and needy his fields afforded the opportunity to earn the rewards of industry. He was eminently popular among all, and one only

of the very few of the missionaries who seemed to have won the esteem, or deserved the respect of the people of the Western Territories, if we may rely upon the representations of numerous persons on this subject. Mrs. Whitman was also remarkable for her kindness, and at that time was administering to the Indians for the measles which extensively prevailed among them. Many dying of the disease, they became suspicious that they were poisoned by the medicines sent by the Whitmans, and this suspicion was said to be fomented and confirmed by the Roman Catholic priests; a suggestion which may proceed from religious intolerance only, and if unfounded, or unsustained, is as demoniac as the act itself would be. One day, during this state of things, the Indians suddenly rushed upon the fort, at noon, while all were in the midst of their peaceful avocations, massacring Mr. and Mrs. Whitman and all male whites, except a Mr. Canfield who escaped, and a Frenchman, whom, with the remaining women and children they spared, carrying them off as prisoners beyond the Uilla River to the Cascade Mountains. Two of the young women they appropriated as wives, treating them in all respects the same as their own squaws, forcing them to work, and beating both them and the children. Another, who was a widow woman, only escaped the same fate by one of those stratagems for which the sex are so admirably adapted. She passed herself off by consent of the Frenchman as his wife. At night, however, the lynx-eyed

chief watching their sleeping apartment, discovered that the mother gathered only her chickens under her wings, while monsieur roosted on the floor. The next day he sternly informed them that "Cayuse no leave squaw to go and lay on the floor, he love squaw more than that, and white man love squaw better than Indian." So madame and monsieur were obliged to "bundle" in true western style, the lady's stratagem having secured her a husband, as soon as a dominie could be found in the settlements to tie the knot.

As speedily as possible after these occurrences were known in the Willamette Valley, a force of several hundred men were organized to pursue the Cayuses, who had boasted that no white man dare cross the Utilia. Meantime, the general agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, a gentleman of much influence with the Indians, volunteered to go up with presents and endeavour to ransom the prisoners. In this he happily succeeded, but the principal chief especially charged them to reach Fort Walla Walla that night; and ere the day expired, overtook them himself, urging them forward, for a part of his people, who were discontented with the terms of the ransom, were in pursuit, seeking vengeance. They effected their escape, however, to the fort, and the scene of their final arrival in Oregon city as described to us by another eye-witness, and from whom also we received some of these particulars, was interesting in the extreme. The little children,

especially, danced wild with joy at the escape from the hardships and terrors which surrounded them.

The Cayuse war immediately ensued, and although these Indians are well-mounted, and armed with muskets and rifles, yet they were speedily humbled and brought to terms, many of them being killed. Keeping along the heights of the Cascade Mountains, they would circle around the camp of the Oregonians in the valley, and discharge their Queen Anne pieces over the heads of their enemy, while the moment one of them came within range of the unerring Western rifle, his saddle was sure to be vacated.

Conspicuous in this little army of Oregon men, was a famous backwoodsman and mountaineer, named McKey, or, as he is familiarly called, old Tom McKey. During the most considerable brush with the Cayuses, one of the chiefs rode up to him, and boasted that his life was charmed. He could swallow hot lead or balls, and McKey's rifle could not kill him. But this was the poor red-skin's last boast on earth, for ere his lips had closed, old Tom's rifle cracked, and sent a ball crashing through his teeth and neck, breaking the delusive charm for ever. We saw this old McKey in the California mountains, and his appearance was beyond all others the most striking. Of middling height, and possessed of a square, athletic, yet agile form, his countenance bronzed by prairie sun and mountain breeze, the fire of youth blazed from his eagle eye,

while its steady vigilance betokened the noon of life, and only the locks of iron-grey foretold its later years. • Of a respectable family and good education, he nevertheless preferred the lonely solitudes of the Rocky Mountains, every nook and corner of which he knew as well as the range of his rifle; and had been for many years an agent for the Hudson's Bay Company.

Fresh from this Cayuse war, and exasperated by the atrocities of the Indians, the Oregon men no sooner reached the head waters of the Sacramento valley, than they avenged every theft of the California Indians by the rifle, which being retaliated, a system of *mutual murder* has sprung up, which men engage in who are called *brave*.

CHAPTER XXII.

Encampment. Thunder and Lightning. Arrival at the Fort. Night Scenes. Captain Sutter. Indian Sailors. Policy of the First Settlers. Log of the Hooikaska. Mosquitoes. Fleas. Shooting Seal. Mode of Taking Otter. Arrival at San Francisco. State of Affairs there. Funeral.

At evening, having overtaken the ox team which had passed us while nooning, and reached the forks of the road, we all concluded to encamp there for the night.

While enjoying our supper of pork and Oregon slapjacks, a thick black cloud spread over the whole heavens, and was soon accompanied by sharp lightning and thunder, with a little rain. Such a phe-

nomena is very rare in California, and years often pass without its occurrence. The rain was probably the last of the brief showers which follow after the rainy season at intervals of some weeks. We soon turned in for the night, some on the ground by our camp fire, others in the waggons, and the remainder under a tent which was then pitched for the first time, preparatory to the erection of a small house of entertainment.

During the night the *coyotes* were yelping around us in great numbers, and some of the villains having the audacity to pull at our tent ropes, one of the sleepers vowed that they put their noses under the canvas and took a snap at his hair. We concluded that he was the barber of his tribe, and mistook our friend's unshorn locks for a tail that needed docking. Continuing our journey early the following morning, we rode twenty miles, reaching Leidersdorff's Rancho, to a late breakfast. Here we met a little short fat Dutchman, named Smidt, well known in the country by a Spanish cognomen which escaped our memory. We allude to him as one of the few who obtained a considerable quantity of gold dust, by employing the Indians to dig. He spoke Spanish fluently, besides English and German, and wrote a good hand, and acquired his influence with the Indians chiefly by kindnesses and a knowledge of their language. He sold common glass beads all last winter, whenever he could obtain them from Kanakas, or newly-arrived emigrants, to the Indians for gold, weight for weight.

A good deal of gold was also sold in the mines at that period, for *three and four dollars the ounce*. At the Stanislaus diggings a box of raisins sold also *weight for weight*, or about four thousand dollars in gold dust. Incredible as this may appear, it is a well known fact, and these raisins were eaten for the cure of the scurvy, prevailing without remedy.

Alluding to the impossibility of employing the Indians any more, Mr. Smidt said, that last winter one of the whites, in looking for a lost horse, called an Indian boy to go and aid him : the poor boy not understanding him ran away in fright, but was instantly shot dead by the rifle of his pursuer. Such lamentable instances of cowardly murder have ever marked the intercourse of whites and Indians, as soon as the former increased in numbers among the latter.

Crossing the beautiful plain, that afternoon we reached Sutter's Fort, covered with dust from head to foot, and enjoyed the novelty of fresh provisions and a table to eat at once more. That night, and the one following, we availed ourselves of the only opportunity while in California to rest in a bed, for sleep much we could not in so luxurious a position ; occupy the floor we could not, for others were ahead of us there ; and we finally resolved that at home we could roll up in our blankets, and sleep in the garden or in a yard with clean bricks.

A great row was also in progress every night among the miners, and others tarrying at the fort.

Drunkenness reigned supreme, and fighting followed of course. A poor Frenchman was nearly killed for saying *sacre bleu*; and bottles full of wine, and heads full of sap were broken without discrimination, and in the greatest confusion. Hundreds of dollars were often spent this way in a single night, and thousands on Sunday, when Pandemonium was in full blast. Gambling prevailed without limit or cessation; men often losing pounds of gold dust in a night, which they were months of dreadful hardship and toil in obtaining.

While there, we had the pleasure of another interview with Captain Sutter; and asking why he declined a further *talk* with the Indians at the Culoma Valley, he said that he could control the Indians, but could not control the whites; and his influence with the former would, therefore, avail nothing. As Indian agent, he receives only 750 dollars per annum, and since the gold discoveries, has expended more than that amount at every *talk* had with the Indians. In a statistical report lately forwarded to the government, he had put down the whole number of Indians in the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, at 80,000, which he believed to be correct. These are divided into, probably, 150 small tribes; and he could manage the whole of them, in his own way, with a squadron of dragoons. He had requested the commanding officers to transmit his resignation as agent, unless he received such a force speedily; for he seemed to prefer the retirement and quiet of his

farm on Feather River, accompanied by his son, a young man of twenty years of age, to all the bustle and annoyance of business.

While at the Embarcadero, we saw a schooner belonging to Captain Sutter, manned entirely by Indian sailors, and which, under command of one of their own number, made continual trips to San Francisco and back. As an illustration of the policy pursued towards these Indians by the first settlers, an instance stated to the writer by the late Mr. Sinclair, may be quoted. While out hunting with Captain Sutter and another person, they were informed by a friendly Indian, that a hostile tribe was approaching to attack their house. Returning home immediately, they arrived before the Indians, and prepared for defence.

The latter soon came up in considerable numbers, and, as a prelude, sent three of their chiefs to the house, ostensibly, for a *talk*, but really, as spies to report the nature and kind of the defences. These were received without any show of suspicion, and informed that their friendship and labour were desired, and that they would be kindly treated and remunerated in return. Assenting to this, they offered to return to their warriors and arrange the terms, but were informed that the *pale faces* never treated with arms in their hands, and that relinquishing these, two of them must remain, while the other carried a message to the warriors, to bring their weapons and deliver them to the chiefs in the house, one at a time. The two chiefs being meantime

held as hostages, the savages were obliged to disarm themselves; and were thus taught that the pale faces fully understood their own mode of warfare, and were superior to them in strategy and courage, as well as in the weapons peculiar to them. Such a policy as this made the Indians peaceable and useful; but it is now abandoned, and extermination substituted in its place. Mr. Sinclair afterwards employed these Indians to labour, keeping them supplied with food by hunting, aided by two or three of their number who were most expert. On one of these occasions, while tracking a deer, accompanied by a boy, he saw what he supposed to be an antelope within close rifle range, and watching it carefully for some moments, finally shot and killed it. Returning shortly after to secure his prize, what was his surprise and sorrow to find he had shot his best Indian hunter, who was thus painted and completely disguised with the head of an antelope. Such are some of the vicissitudes of life in the wilderness.

Bidding adieu to our kind friends at the fort, among whom Philadelphia and the Old Dominion were ably represented, we embarked on the 21st of April, at Sacramento City, on board the schooner *Louisa*, of seventy tons burden. She was the best and prettiest craft on the river, and with a good fresh breeze was a very fast sailer; her timbers having been originally prepared on the Delaware River, and brought out to the Sandwich Islands, where she was completed as the yacht of Kamcha-

meha III., and called the "Hooikaika," which is Kanaka for go-ahead, or not to be beat, or something similar. With her red streak and raking masts, she was exactly the craft for a pirate, and was provided with a snug little cabin finished with the cocoa wood of the islands. We were soon under weigh, having engaged passage for San Francisco at thirty dollars each, and meals at California prices. We had some thirteen passengers, besides one of the owners, (a young Philadelphian, who had been two years in California,) and a crew of seven men, including the captain. This was the return-trip of the first voyage, the vessel having carried some sixty tons of freight, besides several passengers up the Sacramento, drawing nine feet water ; but the river was then very high, and the bark "Whiton" afterwards ascended to the same point, drawing twelve feet. But for the regular navigation of this river, a vessel should only draw four feet. The owners had paid 7000 dollars for this schooner, and although they paid 150 to 200 dollars per month to each of the crew, besides a large amount to her captain, yet her first trip had nearly paid for her. She was, however, a foreign bottom, and only admitted to carry freight on our waters under a temporary permit from the commodore of the squadron and collector of the port, which was liable soon to be rescinded.

The afternoon of our "first day out" was signalized by running smash into a big sycamore tree at Suttersville, through awkwardness in making a

landing; and the branches came snapping and crashing down on deck, some of them nearly as large as our masts, showing the wood to be very weak and brittle. Before we could clear the wreck and get free, we were obliged to cut away nearly half the tree, which delayed us two hours or more; and this occurred many times during the passage down, owing to the windings of the river, and its strong and rapid current at some of these points.

We slept in the berths rolled in our blankets, and next morning appeared as well as could be expected, in consideration of hosts of mice, thousands of cockroaches and millions of musquitoes; besides which, we afterwards captured two large Sand Island *tarantulas*—a species of spider preferable in a museum rather than in a bed.

Reaching Mervill's Slough, we avoided it, and sailed down the main river, which here is very beautiful, perpetually winding, and fringed with trees on both shores. Here we were constantly getting on shoals, and foul of trees, being obliged to carry out our kedge and warp continually.—On the fourth day after sailing, we found ourselves stuck in the mud, near the entrance of Suisun Bay. Meantime, we watched the brandy bottles, or dead marines, as the sailors call them, floating by, one by one, an evidence that something besides water was used in the lovely valley of the Sacramento. At Suisun city, or Toosoon, as some owners of lots in other cities called it, we saw one tent, and were

hailed by a party of surveyors, (among whom was a clerical gentleman,) to know how many lots we would take.

Near this point, we took off ten passengers, Oregonians, from the mines, who had sailed three days before us in another schooner, badly manned and managed. From these men we obtained much valuable and interesting information about Columbia River, and the country bordering on it. In crossing the mountains, seven of them had driven off a large body of Indians who attacked them, but fled precipitately under their fear of a revolver, which they took for an evil spirit quite invincible. To relieve the tedium of our trip, we were greatly amused with an old English sailor on board. He had been an old toper, but was now reformed. He said he could not read or write, and had no wish to learn such *land tasks*. When heaving the lead, and no bottom was reported, the old fellow sung out, "Glad of it—hope there is no bottom;" and losing our flying jib-boom up a tree, he pronounced it a "d—d fine pity." In addition to this specimen of an old salt, our pilot, Antoine, was a genius of the fresh-water order. He was mate of another craft, which was on her trip down at the same time with us; and being afraid that the "Ca'line" would beat us, he kept the steam up and the coppers hot, and the vessel in the mud or up the trees half the trip. "She'll go, she'll go;" "I'll show you the water, captain—you can do the rest;" and, "I showed you the water—didn't I?" were favour-

its expressions with him : and just then we were sure to be brought up all aback.

While becalmed and waiting the tide in the bay of San Pablo, we took our small boat and visited the rocks called the "Two Brothers." We found a few sea-shells, but no eggs, and were speedily glad to retreat, literally *covered* with fleas, which seemed to generate in myriads among the *guano* and feathers.

Seal in great numbers were popping their heads out of water around these rocks, and we shot at several, some of whom took their last dive, and doubtless found themselves wrong side up.

Otter also abounded formerly in these bays, and on the coast, but they have been nearly all destroyed, and are now comparatively rare. The mode of taking them, is to discover their haunts, and pursue them in swift whale boats, keeping up a discharge of small arms, by which means they are driven among the shoals and rocks, or on shore, and easily captured.

At the close of the fifth day after leaving Sacramento City, we got a stiff nor-wester, and sailing twelve knots an hour, soon made Angel and Wood Islands, the latter bearing as we approached it the exact form of an immense sperm whale: and at 9 P.M. we came to anchor in the cove of San Francisco, among some seventy or eighty vessels of all classes. We had thus occupied over five days in the trip of 165 miles, owing to the inexperience of

our captain in the navigation of the river, and other similar causes. The downward trip is often made in three days or less.

We found the state of affairs in San Francisco very much as when we left. Numerous arrivals had taken place, both from abroad and from the mines. The latter consisted of those who were disappointed or disgusted, and those who were returning with their *winter's diggings*. These were chiefly Oregonians or others, on their way home, and the launches from all the mines brought down an aggregate of from 20,000 to 30,000 dollars per day in gold dust. The twenty miners who came in the schooner *Louisa* had about 50,000 dollars, the net result of six months' digging; this would be an average of 2500 dollars each, or 5000 dollars for twelve months; and if generally applied would be an over estimate, because these men are the most robust in the world, and accustomed to the severest labour. The most successful among them had 7500 dollars; but they all agreed that his luck was extraordinary, and from this it will be perceived that several of their number had less than the above average of 2500 dollars.

The price of labour in San Francisco we found had declined a little, and the tendency was downward, as the arrivals of destitute persons from all parts of the world increased. Salaries, which are mostly regulated at a certain sum per month, and not per annum, had declined from 5000 to 3000 per month. Rents were still advancing on the

monthly rates, and none of the expenses of living were decreasing. We went to the house of our former landlord, Mr. Merrill, and obtained consent of a friend to occupy the spot on the floor beside his bed, for the night's rest, and we desired nothing more comfortable.

Soon after our arrival, we were greatly grieved to hear of the demise of Mrs. S., a lady of transcendent piety, amiability, and worth, who, with her husband, Captain S., accompanied by her brother, had been our fellow-passengers in the steamer Oregon. She was the first American lady who died in San Francisco, having fallen a victim to the Panama fever, and poetry would be too hackneyed to express her excellence. Truly might her relatives and friends rejoice that their loss was her great gain.

While reflecting in sadness upon this event, we were requested by our landlady to attend the funeral of a little boy, two years old, as scarcely any but the few women in the place attended on such occasions. Though unshaven as we came from the mines, we went as requested. The scene was an impressive one. In a little frame house, with one room clean and tidy, sat a dozen plainly-dressed females, some five men, and the heart-stricken mother by the side of the little coffin, with her little boy, the only one left, sitting at her feet. Away in the mountains, *digging gold*, was the poor bereaved father, unconscious of his loss, and of the mournful scene in his dwelling. Rev. Mr. Hunt, of Sandwich

Islands, officiated; and then Judge Burnett, of Oregon, Mr. Bent, of Boston, the writer, and a gentleman unknown to him, bore the little coffin to the grave.

Lightly and carefully we trod over the rough hills, and the wild flowers smiled along our path at the little brother so early gathered to rest beneath their nodding blossoms. Peaceful be his slumber, and happy his flight to the far-off golden land.

CHAPTER XXIII.

General View of Alta-California. Climate. Soil. Agricultural Resources. Mineral Wealth. Gold. Silver. Lead. Sulphur. Coal. Quicksilver. State and Commerce prior to the Gold Discoveries. Their Influence and the Mode in which brought to bear. Railroad to the Pacific. Want of an Independent Press. Oregon, and the Influence upon it of the Gold of California.

BEFORE concluding this portion of our narrative, we will endeavour to convey to the reader a general view of Alta-California, as correct as could be obtained by the writer, from an intimate acquaintance with several gentlemen long resident in the country, as well as by his own observation and brief experience. Much of the latter has already been given, and for the former sources of information, he is indebted to the late John Sinclair, Esq., George Mc Dougall, Esq., and others well-informed as to the whole of California.

No climate in the world can be more healthy, and as a general rule more unpleasant than that of the coast. The winter, when the south-east gales prevail, is probably the least disagreeable season, but the last winter, as is well known, was an exception to this rule. The seasons are irregular, the period proper of rain being from November to April inclusive, but in some years it falls very abundantly, in others very sparingly, while several consecutive seasons have been known to elapse with scarcely any rain. This is a serious disadvantage to the agriculturist in any country, but especially in California, where natural irrigation is imperfect and the soil generally inferior. Mr. Sinclair, who resided eleven years in the valley of the Sacramento, having settled there two years earlier than Captain Sutter, considered that valley the finest portion of the country; but said to the writer that he would prefer five years of life in the United States to twenty in California. These gentlemen, by the control of Indian labour, were able to employ artificial irrigation in the raising of wheat, so as to make it comparatively remunerative; but the product bore no comparison to that of the soil of the United States or other of our western territories. The disadvantages of any other system of labour involving greater expenditure, must therefore be at once apparent. Although the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers roll a fine volume of water through the centre of these valleys, yet their lateral streams flow almost entirely through the mountains, and the

natural irrigation being thus imperfect, the country is not what agriculturists consider well watered. On the other hand, the valley of the San Joaquin, as well as the lower portion of that of the Sacramento, is covered to a great extent with the tularc marshes, the draining of which, if practicable, would be useless on account of the annual floods. For the same reasons the climate of much of the interior is unhealthy at certain seasons, and must so continue; but whether it is as much so, as in some of our western states and territories, experience only can determine.

A rich soil, the natural accumulations of which have been undisturbed for ages, will display an abundant growth and great variety of trees. Neither of these indications present themselves to the eye of the traveller in California. Oak, sycamore, fir and red wood, comprise the family of trees, and of these the latter are most flourishing and abundant, chiefly, however, in the mountains. The red wood tree grows to a great size in some parts of the country, and apparently belongs to the cedar class, which, as well as the fir, is known to grow abundantly in the poorest soil.

On the shores of the Sacramento or in crossing that valley, we saw little either of wild clover or rich natural grasses, such as are considered nutritious for cattle or horses. The beautiful and abundant wild flowers which we have described, seem to grow rather in mockery of the soil, than as evidence of its depth and strength. We also noticed

the remarkable absence of the smaller kinds of birds and songsters of the grove, which uniformly abound in a country rich in natural vegetation. Except grapes, which grow and have been cultivated in the southern region of the country, California seems devoid of fruits. They may doubtless be cultivated to some extent, as well as many other products of the earth ; but we allude now only to natural resources and capacity.

We know that both soil and climate are considered more genial in those portions of the country known as the Nappa Valley, and the lower Pueblo, or the Pueblo de los Angeles ; and that some portions of the Santa Clara Valley have yielded extraordinary returns in wheat ; but these have been the great sheep pasturages since the first discovery, and do not afford fair data by which to judge of the general agricultural resources of the country. Those portions bordering on the coast enjoy the benefit of the continual fogs, and are therefore best adapted to cultivation ; but this is a very inconsiderable part of the whole.

The period of our visit was at the close of the rainy season, when the country appears to the best advantage ; but the intense heat of the summer sun and perpetual drought of that season, covers the whole surface of the interior with crisp and burnt vegetation.

The coast range of hills being subject to the influence of the mists and fogs, is not so liable to this change, and affords the best grazing for cattle and

horses which abound in the country in a wild state. Since the decline of the missions, however, these have rapidly decreased; but are represented as being again on the increase since the overthrow of the Mexican Government.

California is therefore adapted by Nature rather for a grazing than an agricultural country, yet there is no doubt that its capabilities in the latter respect, will hereafter be fully and fairly developed, from necessity, however, and not from choice.

The mineral wealth of the country is now ascertained beyond dispute, to be greater than that of any known part of the world. The discoveries of gold so far as they have progressed, reveal supplies of the precious metal, inexhaustible for many years, and it is believed they are yet only inceptive. Whether it exists in larger and deeper deposits, or in any other form than is already manifest, is extremely doubtful; but when the *placers* shall have been exhausted by the common processes, so that labour and capital may be employed to advantage, the out turn of gold by the use of Berks' washer and other scientific appliances, will still be very remunerative.

Beside the common modes now resorted to for washing gold, the Chilians adopt a plan used in their own country with great success. Building an inclined plain of flat rough stone near the stream, they scatter the earth to be washed over its surface, and then allow the water to pour gradually over it.

Thus the soil and gravel is separated and carried off, leaving the gold deposited on the rough plain.

The most reliable estimate, and the highest one which we heard from those who have been long in the country, of the whole quantity of gold obtained up to April last, is eight millions of dollars in value. Large quantities are concealed and hoarded by the *rancheros* and others throughout the country, and it is therefore impossible to obtain an accurate estimate. Aside, however, from the value of this the most precious of the metals, the wonderful mineral wealth of California in other metals remains yet to be developed.

Mines of native silver are known to exist in the mountains of the gold region.

Lead in immense quantities and native purity is found in the mountains in the neighbourhood of the mission of San Luis de Obispo. Sulphur abounds in large deposits back of Sonoma on the San Pablo Bay, and coal has been found in limited quantities on the northern coast. Its existence has also been reported near the straits of Karquinez ; with what truth we are unable to say, though we are disposed to doubt it.

But the most important, if not the most valuable, of the mineral products of this wonderful country, is its quicksilver. The localities of several mines of this metal are already known, but the richest yet discovered is the one called Forbes's mine, about sixty miles from San Jose. Originally discovered and *denounced* according to the Mexican laws then

in force, it fell under the commercial management of Forbes of Tepic, who also has some interest in it. The original owner of the property on which it is situated, endeavoured to set aside the validity of the *denouncement*, but whether on tenable grounds or otherwise we know not. At this mine by the employment of a small number of labourers and two common iron kettles for smelting, they have already sold quicksilver to the amount of 200,000 dollars, and have now some two hundred tons of ore awaiting the smelting process. The cinnabar is said to yield from sixty to eighty per cent of pure metal, and there is no doubt that its average product reaches fifty per cent. The effect of these immensely rich deposits of quicksilver upon the wealth and commerce of the world, can scarcely be too highly estimated, provided they are kept from the clutches of the great monopolists. Not only will its present usefulness in the arts, be indefinitely extended and increased by new discoveries of science, but the extensive mines of gold and silver in Mexico, Chili, and Peru, hitherto unproductive, will now be made available by its application.

The wonderful influence of all this mineral wealth upon California itself, is most apparent, when comparing its present prosperous condition with the state and commerce of the country prior to the gold discoveries. The supplies of sea furs had dwindled into insignificance. The quantity of hides and tallow was steadily decreasing, and the difficulty and delay in obtaining such cargoes on the coast in late

years are well known. The trading post of the Russian Fur Company on the Sacramento was discontinued, and the trade and commerce of San Francisco and other ports were in a state of collapse. Emigration from the United States, though somewhat attracted thither by the glowing accounts of the country, and by arousing the jealousy of our people towards England, was yet insignificant, compared with the tide rolling towards Oregon; and many, after looking into the country, had already abandoned it for the latter fine territory. Our whaling fleets in the Pacific would not frequent the bay of San Francisco, though "capable of receiving the navies of the world," when supplies of far greater abundance and variety were cheaply and easily obtained at the Sandwich Islands.

The supposed transcendent advantages and importance of the bay of San Francisco, together with the magnificent project of a railroad to the Pacific, first conceived and urged upon the attention of the nation by Asa Whitney, Esq., of New York, fixed the attention of the government and the hearts of the people, upon the acquisition of the whole of Alta-California. The treaties with Mexico and New Grenada, the establishment of the Pacific mail steamers, and the organization of the Panama Railroad Company, soon followed. Meantime it was confidently predicted that San Francisco would become the lap of the commerce of the East, and that the teas and silks of China entering her portals would flow along the great artery of the continent

projected by Mr. Whitney. Eminently practical and feasible as the construction of this road on the proposed plan is generally believed to be, yet most will admit, that a quarter of a century will be consumed in its completion.

Such being the case, it becomes apparent that if the trade of China is ever diverted, to any great extent, from its present channels,—which some even doubt—it must be by the employment of steamers, from the port of Shanghai to the Sandwich Islands and thence to Panama. Should this be accomplished, time only can determine whether or not a railroad from San Francisco to New York will be able to compete, either in *celerity or economy*, with the Panama railroad and steamers to that port and New Orleans. When teeming millions occupy the great western territories beyond the Mississippi, *both* of these routes to the Eastern world may be essential to the requirements of the Great Republic of that day.

Such was the actual condition of California, when sustained only by its natural resources for commerce, and agriculture; and such its prospective advantages prior to the gold discoveries.* If the above reasoning be correct, it is plain that these discoveries alone saved that country from the prostration into which it had already fallen; and this is not only admitted by old residents there, but further vouched for by the dozen old *adobie* houses constituting the town of San Francisco in 1846.

The wonders of the gold region were accordingly

trumpeted to the world, with unabating, but by no means unforeseeing zeal. The rich *placers* were visited by government officers, land and town proprietors, and by the remainder of the population generally. Many commenced gold digging, while others returned to purchase real estate, perfect their titles, make town maps, and above all to send glowing accounts to the United States of the result of all the most successful efforts in the mines. To these were added a delicious climate and wonderful agricultural fertility.

The inaccessibility of the *placers*, the diseases, the hardships, and the very moderate remuneration resulting to the great mass of the miners, were quite forgotten or omitted, the communications and reports of a few only excepted, while all the crimes or outrages were committed by Stevenson's regiment, whose name is *legion*. All this may perhaps be accounted for by the gold excitement, than which none other is better calculated to unhinge the mind, or blunt the moral sense; but be that as it may, the results are partially before us, and will yet be more fully developed. Four hundred vessels and cargoes were yet to arrive from the United States, the aggregate cost value of which could not be less than ten millions of dollars, when the market was already glutted with nearly every kind of merchandise; and some have since gone to look after their property who never dreamed of visiting California in person, while the quantity of gold yet received is a mere mite compared with the property

gone there. The cotton and linen goods, and summer clothing, shipped in accordance with the false ideas of the climate, and the large ships which were to ascend the streams of the gold region, and serve as a home for the miners while in the *diggings*, might well close our review of this state of things. But unfortunately we left behind us in San Francisco, too many, who while awaiting the arrival of some of these vessels and cargoes, were disappointed and sick at heart, for us not to be well aware that the end is not yet.

An independent press is needed in California more than anything else; and without disparagement to the newspaper now established there, others might find a legitimate field of usefulness and advantage. This view of things in California, we are well aware, differs much from some of the correspondence from that country; but so great is the excitement there, that it is next to impossible for new comers to obtain a correct knowledge of the aspect of affairs.

The effect of the gold of California upon the prosperity of Oregon, already beneficial, seems likely to continue so in a more eminent degree. Large numbers of her hardy and industrious settlers, spent the last winter in the mines of California; generally with success commensurate with their perseverance, prudence and sobriety. We met and conversed with many of these while in the country, and their general estimate was, that fifteen

hundred Oregonians had returned, or were on their way home, with an average of fifteen hundred dollars, each, in gold dust, which would make up an aggregate of two and a quarter millions of dollars; and we do not think two millions would be an over estimate. All these Oregonians return to resume their residence in the Willamette Valley, though some of them will again visit the mines of California next winter.

They alluded to Oregon in the most glowing terms, as an agricultural country watered by many beautiful streams, which rise in the Cascade Mountains and empty into the Columbia. The climate, as represented by them, is also far superior to that of California, the rainy season being more regular and abundant, and the dry season not so continued or intense. The effects of the climate upon the constitution are of the most beneficial character, if we may judge by the contrast between these robust men, and the native resident Californians, of the labouring classes, who are generally of diminutive and puny appearance.

Before closing our general review of Alta-California, we will remark, that so large an emigration of the American people as have gone to that territory, must make something of the country. They will make it one of the States of this Union, at all events, and speedily, too; and although the country is only adapted by nature, for mining and grazing, yet a constant trade must result from the former,

and more or less agriculture be added to the latter, from the necessity of the case. A few have made, and will hereafter make fortunes there, and very many of those who remain long enough will accumulate something ; but the great mass, all of whom expected to acquire large amounts of gold in a short time, must be comparatively disappointed. The writer visited California to dig gold, but chose to abandon that purpose rather than expose his life and health in the mines, and as numbers were already seeking employment in San Francisco without success, and he had neither the means nor the inclination to speculate, he concluded to return to his family and home industry.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Farewell to California. Monterey. Santa Barbara. Ship on Fire. San Diego. Gulf of California. West Coast of Mexico. A Day at Mazatlan. Beauty of the Harbour and Town. Ramblings and Incidents.

THE nor'-west gale was in full blast at noon of the 1st day of May, and the streets of San Francisco filled with driving sand, as wrapped in thick shawls, or muffled in cloaks and heavy pilot coats, the homeward-bound passengers took their way to the place of embarkation.* We thought of moving-day in New York, and there was much around to remind us of that occasion, always excepting the

weather, which was as cold and disagreeable as the March and November gales at home. The evening preceding our departure, our host, Mr. Merrill, insisted upon bidding us adieu in a glass of sparkling champagne, provided by his hospitality ; and we then experienced the regret of parting from very many recent but kind and esteemed friends and acquaintances.

Mingling in California and on his way there, with with large numbers of his countrymen from all parts of the Union, I should fail to do justice to my own feelings, did I not avail myself of this opportunity to acknowledge my appreciation of the friends thus acquired. Many of these would also have returned at that period, had their engagement permitted. Some have already followed ; and it is not unreasonable to conclude, that a similar distaste for the life and habits necessarily prevalent in such a confused state of society, will induce others, and especially heads of families, to return to the regular occupations to which they have been heretofore accustomed at home.

In company with ninety other passengers, among whom were some successful miners, as well as others, returning, like ourselves, disappointed with the country, we slowly threaded our way in the steamship "California" out of the crowd of vessels at the anchorage.

This ship was the American steamer, which doubled Cape Horn into the Pacific ; and Captain

Cleveland Forbes had the honour of being the pioneer in this great enterprise. Deserted at San Francisco by all her officers and crew, Captain Forbes and a young engineer named James De Kay alone had the moral firmness to adhere to their duty and engagements, under temptation, the nature of which only those on the spot can comprehend, and which very few men were able to resist.

This ship had thus been detained for want of men and coal during a period of two months; but sailors returned from the mines were now abundant, and anxious to 'ship—some for one voyage, until the waters were lower in the mines, and others to quit the country, or to resume their sea-faring life.

We had also on board at least half a million dollars in gold dust, belonging to several miners, or consigned to owners of merchandise—some disposed of at a profit, but much at considerable loss; and, doubtless, large quantities of gold are yet to come forward under similar circumstances.

Our voyage was to be enlivened by the presence of several ladies, among whom were the wives of distinguished officers of the army, and others, who had accompanied their husbands to El Dorado in the first voyage of this steamer. The Sandwich Islands were also ably represented in the presence of two American ladies from Honolulu; and our decks being clear for promenading or amusement, we had a pleasant prospect before us.

Anchoring for a few hours in Sancelito Bay, we

laid in full supplies of good water; and at midnight passed through the narrows into the Pacific, watching the fast-receding forms of the Farallones, with no small degree of pleasure. "Below" was then the cry, and all turned in—some to brood over scenes of parting—some to toss in restless anxiety about the safe transmission of their gold dust across the Isthmus, and others to wonder which caused the most trouble or unhappiness in the word—the possession of gold or the lack of it.

The following morning we hove in sight of Point Pinosi, and entered the bight of Monterey. The town, by daylight, more than confirmed our impressions of it by night; and its cluster of *adobie* and tile-roofed houses, many of which appeared large and commodious, together with the fort and government building, with the pine-covered hills in the back-ground, presented a very pleasant view. The Stars and Stripes were flying over the government house, where Brigadier-General Riley had just assumed his duties as civil governor of the territory, Major-General Persifer F. Smith being military commander-in-chief.

Receiving on board one other passenger, we proceeded down the coast to Santa Barbara, arriving there on the morning of the second day after. Approaching this port, vessels pass through what is called the canal, where a series of pretty islands lie some distance off from the shore, and create a smoother sea inside.

We also had a fine view of the St. Ynes or San-

ta Barbara Mountain, where Fremont's battalion crossed in the stormy Christmas night of 1846, suffering great hardship and losing a large number of horses. A good road, suitable for the transportation of cannon, is said to be near at hand, avoiding this mountain entirely.

The town of Santa Barbara lies at the terminus of a level and beautiful plain, which extends to the northward, behind the mountain, dotted with groves of trees, presenting a picturesque scene. The houses are of the same description as those of Monterey, but present a newer and more regular appearance, and contain about one thousand inhabitants.

A mile or two in the back-ground, and more elevated, stand the Mission buildings with the Cathedral towers rising in the midst. These are in good repair and are still occupied by the venerable padres. The anchorage is a mere open roadstead, and is unsafe for vessels during a gale.

Having been disappointed in obtaining supplies both here and at Monterey, we continued our voyage on San Francisco fare; consisting chiefly of rice, salt provisions, and preserved meats,

On Sunday, we were off Point Conversion and Point Conception, with fine weather but rough sea, which usually prevails off the latter point, called the Hatteras of this coast.

At eleven o'clock the following night, after being disturbed a long time by what we supposed was the smoke of the lamps in the state rooms of our

neighbours, the engine was suddenly stopped; the ship being on fire from the heating of the journal, a part of the machinery, from which the regular supply of oil had been withheld by the choking of the ducts. The hose was instantly rigged, but as the fire was not threatening, it was extinguished, and the journal cooled in the course of an hour, by the use of buckets only. While any uncertainty existed, there was some alarm on the part of the ladies; and the idea of a ship on fire, at sea, is a sort of conviction that what is to be, will be, and cannot be avoided. In the present instance, although we were not over thirty miles from the land, the timely discovery and mastery of the fire created a new debt of gratitude to a kind Providence, perhaps felt if not acknowledged by all.

Next day we ran into the pretty little bay of San Diego, where we found a transport at anchor, and some United States troops just landed; no doubt to help to work Uncle Sam's mines on their own hook, as soon as they could obtain a chance for desertion. Here again we were disappointed in the wished-for supplies; all the male population of California being engaged in trading or digging for gold.

Continuing our voyage, we hove in sight one evening of Cape San Lucas, and doubling it gladly bade adieu to the desolate-looking coast of Lower California, shaping our course with delightful weather and smooth sea, across the Gulf of California, towards the west coast of Mexico.

At sunset, we beheld its towering mountain peaks looming in the distance, and laying off during the night, entered the port of Mazatlan at daylight.

Approaching from the seaward, the harbour and city of Mazatlan afford a superb view. Immense island rocks, three or four on each side of the harbour, present their bold cliffs to the sea, standing like sentinels from the main, one before the other. The largest of these on the northern side is called the Creston, and is a conspicuous landmark to vessels, in making the port. Between these rocks, the sea rolls in, forming a white line of breakers in the southern or old harbour, but leaving a safe anchorage and good entrance to the port, except during the prevalence of the south-east gales, when it is the most dangerous harbour in the Pacific, resembling Valparaiso in this respect. Close upon the bay and shut in by low, but desolate-looking hills, above which high mountains are seen in the distance, lies the beautiful and bright-looking city of Mazatlan.

Accepting the polite invitation of the captain of the port, who is a Swedish gentleman, we were soon alongside of the mole, in his boat, and prepared to spend a day in Mazatlan. Entering the town, we were delighted with its rows of pretty and neat-looking houses; built in the Mexican style, with flat roofs, the walls covered with a coat of dazzling white, or with peach blossom, stone and straw colours, and many of them having highly ornamented iron balconies on the second story.

The streets were clean, generally of a uniform, moderate width, and provided with substantial stone sidewalks. This is the principal commercial port in Mexico, and the signs all around us of a thriving trade were unmistakable. It is difficult to make correct estimates of population, but we venture to suppose that there are ten thousand inhabitants in Mazatlan. The town itself presents a new and renovated appearance. Houses and warehouses were being built or repaired, and the long lines of the principal streets were filled with shops and warehouses of every kind. Many of these we visited, and found them well stocked with merchandise from America, Europe and China. A neatness, both with regard to their houses, shops and persons, prevailed here, which we did not meet with elsewhere, among either Mexicans or New Grenadians.

We found also many of our countrymen, who had crossed Mexico on their way to California. All were eager for news from the gold region; and while mingling together with the utmost hilarity and good feeling, we were greatly amused by their perplexity, and the contrariety of our own reports. One of our passengers, who had made 50,000 dollars as proprietor of monte banks, represented California as the Paradise of money seekers; others, who from professional duties or other causes had never visited the *mines* or the *interior*, thought gold abundant and easily obtained, and the country a second Italy; while the contrary views of those

who had resided long in California, or visited and worked in the mines, were received with little credence and less interest. Some of these poor fellows, who had exhausted all their means in reaching Mazatlan, were anxious to go on board the steamer in any capacity, and thus we pass over another leaf of the future history of the rush to California.

Resuming our peregrination about the town, we came to a kind of natural quay, north of the principal bay. Here are several stately houses, with large open courts in the centre, provided with cocoa and orange trees, with occasionally a fountain. The first stories are used as counting-houses, while above these are the residences of the families. Looking through the doors opening upon the balconies, we saw some of the walls adorned with oil paintings, and ceilings painted in fresco with the most exquisite designs. At the foot of the quay, the waters of the gulf and of the Pacific came thundering in with combined force, and during the south-east gales are said to present a magnificent and terrific spectacle in the harbour, then deserted by everything that floats. The breeze here we found most refreshing, and the climate is said to be very fine and salubrious, except during the season of greatest heat, when it is enervating.

At dinner we enjoyed some specimens of Mexican and Chinese cookery, as the Canton Cafe was kept by Chinamen, who were real celestials. A Mexican funeral also came off, at which there was a most extensive display of fire-crackers and

rockets, for what reason we cannot conceive, unless to shoot the little devils flying about after the soul of the Don.

The hour for embarking having arrived, we bid *adios* to Mazatlan with many agreeable impressions, and hastened to the mole. Here were seated three Mexican soldiers, in all their peacock splendour. Giving us the wink, one of our party handed a black bottle half filled with cocoa-nut oil to a soldier. Seizing with avidity the supposed cogniaë, he gulped it down; but quickly passed it to his comrade, and all three were in a moment engaged in untying the twist of their lips on the cuffs of their fine uniforms, amidst our uproarious laughter.

Shortly, we were under full headway, passing out of the harbour, beholding as our last objects of interest the beautiful British frigate *Inconstant*, smuggling specie, and the brigantine "*Amelia*," on board which murder and piracy had been committed a few weeks before, in the Pacific.

CHAPTER XXV.

San Blas. Plaza and Market. Mexicans and Mexican Horses. A Ride along the Beach. Sand Flies. An Irish Lass. Ruins of the Old Town. A Mexican Naval Hero. Scenes and Incidents. A Blue-light on the Ocean.

HAVING obtained abundant supplies, we sailed from Mazatlan, in high good humour, delighted with our day's sojourn, and reached San Blas, one hundred miles down the coast, the following morning. I had spent two days here during my voyage to California, and the description of the town and the occurrences of my visit are now given.

Descending by the falls of the rope, "hand over fist," as the sailors say, we obtained a seat in the first boat, and were soon landed on the deep sand beach at the mouth of the river St. Jago. Here were piled in confusion all kinds of merchandise, some just landed from the six or seven vessels in the harbour, and some awaiting shipment to San Francisco. Winding through the dark sand, our attention was attracted by an enormous tropical tree, its extended branches and foliage spreading out over a space some two hundred feet in circumference, and supported by a trunk of proportionate magnitude. The name given to it by the natives was *mamazite*, or something similar.

Crossing a rude wooden bridge thrown over a little inlet or creek, we entered the town, consist-

ing of some three or four hundred *adobie* and palmetto-roofed houses, rudely thatched, lining the narrow and irregular streets, which are composed of the same dry, hot sand. Passing many little shops and wine stores, we came to the *plaza*, where, under the shelter of a kind of booth, the market people were chaffering and cheating *los Yankees* with all their might. Fine oranges, limes, and bananas were to be had in abundance, and we mingled with the tawny, dirty crowd, till nightfall.

The lower class of Mexicans, on the west coast, appear to be a dark, Indian-looking race, with just enough of the Spanish blood, without its appropriate intelligence, to add a look of cunning to their gleaming, treacherous eyes. The men are tall and robust, but appear effeminate in their fancy *serapas*, under which they invariably conceal their ready and cowardly knife.

Seeing numerous *caballeros* dashing about on their little Mexican ponies or mustangs, we obtained one, gaily caparisoned, and made for the sea-shore. By dint of urging and whipping, (being unprovided with the indispensable spurs,) we got him down on the hard beach to the edge of the surf, which was roaring in fine style, and then giving him the rein, laid on the whip, right and left, as hard as we could dash for two or three miles. It was glorious excitement, with the fine breeze, the thunder of old Ocean and the tramping of the horse singing to the accompaniments; beating the fashion-

able concerts all hollow, and enabling us besides to enjoy the breath of the salt spray, instead of the sickening odour of hair oil and cologne.

Wandering afterwards through the burning sand, which seemed like red-hot shot, we were incessantly annoyed with the bites of a minute little insect called *sand flies*, which, during calm weather, or with the wind off shore, reached even the ship, filling the state rooms with their tormenting presence. To escape, in some measure, from these, and the heat of the mid-day sun, which induces the dangerous San Blas fever, we seated ourselves in the different shops and cafes.

Behind the counter of one of these, we noticed a large, broad-shouldered woman with blue eyes, ruddy complexion, and black hair. From these indications, and the fear in which all seemed to regard the unceasing clatter of her tongue, we suspected her origin to be rather of the Hibernian than of the Celtic race, and accordingly addressed her in our language. She quickly replied, "no ablar Inglise," (I do not speak English;) but thinking to determine the question more satisfactorily, we said, "Sure, my darlint, and it's from the green isle ye are, the swatest gem of the say;" at which she blushed scarlet, and went to the other end of the shop, leaving all the notions and knickknacks to our care and consolation. Making no further inquiries, however, she soon returned, apparently not at all displeased with our gallant allusion to her newly-discovered nationality.

Leaving some of our companions chaffering for cigars, kicking the dog, or teasing the Senoras, we joined a squad of rovers, and strayed out of the town, through chaparal and underwood, to the top of a high bluff immediately upon the ocean, and about a mile from the present town. Here we found a deserted plaza, with the remains of a broken column standing in the centre, surrounded by the ruins of houses of the wealthy Spaniards, who were driven out of the country impoverished by the first revolution. On one side of this square, and upon the verge of the precipice, stands a very large and substantial stone edifice, formerly, no doubt, the legislative or municipal hall. Seeing a ladder at one end, we ascended to the roof, which is flat solid masonry, of astonishing strength and durability. The view from thence is truly magnificent. At the base of the precipice towards the south-east lies the broad ocean, with the miniature-looking vessels resting on its bosom like sea birds ready to spread their wings, while along the whole coast, and far inland, the high mountains extend into dim distance, presenting the outlines of extinct volcanoes among their giant forms. Clustered around the deserted plaza, the melancholy ruins relate to sighing wind or echoing foot-fall their oft-told tale of ruined pride and desolation, while others partially repaired and occupied, tell of renovation and hope, in the future for Mexico. Aside from these stands the old cathedral, not to be described by any architectural comparison we can muster, except that of a large barn,

with a tremendous big hen-coop at one end. Perched within, we descried the usual number of bells which in by-gone years have predicted the story of the future till it has come to be that of the past.

Indulging in these reflections, we dismounted from the roof, and reaching terra firma in safety, notwithstanding our flighty imaginations, looked around for some ingress to the apparently deserted building. While thus engaged, we were surprised by the sudden appearance of a gentleman who emerged through a ruined door-way, and informed us, in a mixture of Spanish and English, that he was "El Comandante" of the Mexican Steamer "Guadaloupe," during the war. He then produced his uniform coat, and with true Mexican vanity and braggadocia, boasted that he had captured the United States Brig "Truxton." He looked somewhat crest-fallen, however, when reminded that she was high and dry upon the rocks at the time, and that no doubt he had sometimes captured turtle in the same way. The coat disappeared, the Mexican *vamosed*, and we "sloped," in aldermanic convulsions.

Descending the hill by another path, we found a huge wooden cross, bedecked with artificial flowers and some natural ones just placed there by the faithful. Over the cross, on a brass plate, are the letters I. N. R. J., initials of the Latin inscription of Pilate; and the whole is protected from the weather by a roof.

Returning to the town we obtained a true Mexican dinner, consisting of jerked beef stewed with onions and plenty of cayenne pepper, which they call "carne con chile colorado." This was accompanied by the everlasting frijoles, or beans; and for desert, delicious chocolate and tortillas. The Indian corn, for the latter luxury, we saw in process of preparation. Two young girls were busily engaged in pounding it between two large smooth stones. One of these señoritas was quite pretty, and as she gracefully bent forward in her useful employment, displayed a bust which Saratoga might envy; while the bright tinge upon her cheek, deepened or grew faint in fitful gleams of roscate hue.

Strolling through the town as evening drew near, we saw two Mexican gallants busily engaged in preparing their guitars for a serenade. Their door stood invitingly open, and old recollections made their bachelors's hall too attractive to pass by unvisited: so we entered, and were entertained with the utmost politeness, partaking of a delicious beverage, called "chia fresco," made by steeping small sweet glutinous seeds in water.

Thus terminate our recollections of San Blas, which, like those of many places we visited, were rendered agreeable as much by our determination to be pleased, as by other causes.

Before sailing from that port on our return-voyage, a most ludicrous scene was enacted alongside. A small canoe, with two Mexicans and a cargo of

bananas and melons, approached the ship for traffic, and as there was quite a swell on, *el patron* laid hold of the stairway over the side. In a moment the frail cockle-shell tipped over, and away went *peon* and *patron*, bananas and melons—the latter *water-melons* now beyond all question.—Bobbing about among these, we soon saw the skulls of the “greasers;” and the empty, pomatumed pate of a Parisian dandy could not have floated more lightly in oil upon the troubled waters. Floundering ruefully thus amidst the wreck of their hopes, afraid of sharks below, and pounded above by the fandango among the melons, screeches and yells of fear and pain arose, such as only a horse or a *fireman* could imitate. The upshot of all was, that John Shark lost a lean dinner, and Jack Tar got sundry melons by coming to the rescue, while the poor “greasers” employed the rest of the day in fishing for their lost fruit.

Darkness rested upon the calm surface of the sea as we slowly glided from our anchorage; and the white foam had scarce gathered in our wake to denote that our home was once more upon the deep, when the whole scene was suddenly illumined by a light as intense as if the queen of night had leaped into the waves from her throne in the sky. Distinct as at noonday, the bold white rocks in the harbour rose beyond our bows; while the tall masts of a large ship, her white sails motionless as the still air, lay off our quarter, with the meteor flag of England drooping at her mizen. Rushing now

with accelerated speed full on our course, the starry banner flew to our peak, and waved a brief adieu, as we gave three hearty cheers in exchange for the bluff hurrahs and beautiful *blue-light* of our English sailor friends.

Now, kind reader, if you never saw a blue-light in a dark night upon the ocean, do not call this description high-flown; and remember, too, that we had ladies on board, to retouch our imagination with their delighted exclamations. That's all.

We continued our voyage with lessened numbers, having landed several of our passengers at San Blas, to pursue their journey by the principal route across Mexico, through Tepic and Guadalajara, to the capital. Among these was a merchant of that city, who had visited San Francisco with large means for investment in gold dust, at prices reported to prevail when he left home. He was accompanied by his friend, a young English gentleman, for many years a resident of Mexico, and who had been to the Stanislaus *diggins* to see the *elephant*, and who saw the veritable *Mastodon* himself. He proved himself, in our brief acquaintance, the best of friends, and never so happy as when we afforded him a chance to grumble at California and the gold region.

There was also a poor Mexicano landed at the same port, who had lost overboard seven pounds of gold dust, the result of his winnings in the mines; and now he could neither play *monté* or buy *aguardiente*.

Missing one of the crew the same night, there was a general hunt for him alow and aloft, fearing, as many did, that he had fallen overboard, or gone to the "halls of the Montezumas;" but we found him at last, snugly stowed away in the carpenter's room, in a state which did not augur well for his career in El Dorado. It was, however, quite an incident at sea, and as such duly announced by the corps of reporters at breakfast on the following morning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Bay and Town of Acapulco. A Sunday on Shore. Incidents. Departure. A Stern Chase. Water in Exchange for Champagne. Short of Coals. Alarm of Mutiny. Court Martial and Ludicrous Scenes. Coast of Central America. Harbour of Realejo. Town and River of David. Coibo. Banna and Otoque. Decks for Fuel. End of Voyage.

AFTER a pleasant run of two days and a half, still in sight of this bold coast, we arrived at Acapulco early on Sunday morning, 13th of May. To the northward of this bay, the mountains are much higher than other portions of the coast, and vessels can make the port with greater certainty by steering for them.

The Bay of Acapulco is, without exception, the finest harbour on the Pacific, and for security can-

not be excelled by any in the world. The morning was clear and beautiful, with a gentle breeze from the ocean, as our ship entered the main channel to the southward of a little island, which seems as if cut off from the foot of the mountain, to form another beautiful but smaller entrance to the bay. The principal one by which vessels usually enter and depart, we found to be some half a mile in length, and one mile in breadth, with the mountains rising 2 or 3000 feet on either hand. Gazing eagerly through this magnificent opening for a sight of the town, our eyes met only the tall mountains rising to the clouds, with the yellow sand beach skirted by picturesque groves of cocoa trees at their base. Here suddenly emerging into the bay, which lies more to the north, we were in the midst of a fine circular basin, some miles in circumference and completely land-locked, seeming like a deep tranquil lake in the midst of the mountains.

The town, with its pretty white *adobie* houses, lies close on the north-eastern shore, and is protected by a fort on a bluff at the southern side, which commands the entrance to the harbour. As we anchored abreast of the town, the people gathered in groups under the large trees or in front of their houses, all dressed in holiday attire, and the ship was instantly surrounded by canoes and craft of every description, filled with jabbering boatmen or people anxious to get on board. Among these we were pleased to meet some of our country-

men whom we had left in Panama, and who had reached this port in their little schooner *Constellation*, on their way to San Francisco. In return for information highly interesting to them, they very politely took us ashore in their boat, and made us their guests for the day. As we landed astride the shoulders of a swarthy Mexican, the organ was pealing from door and window of a pretty little cathedral, a hundred yards from the shore, and we found ourselves in the midst of an exceedingly quiet, neat, and orderly population. The town consists of several hundred houses, shops, and cafes, all of a dazzling white, with flat roofs, and generally clean and well arranged in the interior. The streets are irregular and not wide, but are characterized by the same scrupulous nicety. We, of course, visited the market and plaza, and found them filled with animated groups trading, gambling, cockfighting, or lazily enjoying their existence in the sun; the *senoras* especially revelling in the fragrance of the *cigarritos* held in their olive lips. Presently we heard the notes of a full military band playing Hail Columbia, and other national airs, by request of some of our old California residents, who had long been strangers to these inspiring strains. Obtaining, after diligent inquiry, some beautiful shells gathered by the natives on the shores of the Pacific, we returned to our hospitable quarters, well pleased with our ramble, and enjoyed the luxury of a bath in most primitive style, behind a curtain, in the court-yard. And

Como no or *quien sabe*, as the fair *greaserita* said, who filled the queer jar with the pure element.

The brief twilight was already succeeded by myriads of shining stars, ere we bid adieu to our kind entertainers, and reached once more the steamer's deck. Here we sat for hours watching the sombre shadows of the mountains on the bosom of the lonely little bay, with here and there a noiseless canoc haunting the gloom like a restless spirit of the ocean, or gliding with sudden velocity into the bright starlight; the stillness of night, broken only by the murmur of the land breeze, or the low ripple of the waves under our counter.

Early next morning, having obtained all our supplies, we took our departure for Panama, which being now only 1500 miles distant, we hoped to make our next port of entry. Passing out of the bay, we noticed a remarkable cut in the mountains towards the north, said to have been made by the original Spanish population, for the purpose of admitting the land breeze more effectually, or perhaps for the construction of a new road to the city.

The city of Mexico lies only about 280 miles to the north of Acapulco; but the mountains are higher and the routes more difficult than the one from San Blas: Acapulco will, however, become an excellent depot of supplies for our Pacific steamers, and may occupy in the future a more important position than in the past century, when

* *Como no*, *why not*, *Quien sabe*, *who knows*; favourite Spanish exclamations when puzzled for a reply, or not caring to give one,

the richly-laden galleons of Lima and Manilla annually entered the port ; its waters affording ample depth and capacity for any number of the largest ships, and being susceptible of the most complete defence.

As we again entered the main channel, bound out to sea at the rate of ten miles an hour, we desoried a little canoe following us in the distance, with one of its occupants furiously waving a handkerchief. This proved to be a man engaged as cook, who had all his luggage on board, had received an advance of wages, and was most anxious to accompany us ; but he had tarried too long with his wife and babies, so our skipper was inexorable, and the poor fellow was left to realize that a stern chase is a long one, for he followed us clear out of the bay ere he returned to meet the jeers of his companions, and perhaps get his ears boxed into the bargain.

The afternoon of that day we spoke a brig, eighty-one days from Valparaiso, bound to San Francisco, full of Chilians, who had been forty days on allowance of water. We sent a boat with an ample supply of the needed beverage, and received in return from her grateful captain, a dozen of good Champagne, and sundry hams, on which we toasted and feasted, and kept a bright look-out for more vessels short of water.

We can conceive of no calamity at sea more to be dreaded than this. Surrounded by the interminable briny flood, with the noise of waters perpetually ringing in the ears, the parched throat be-

comes an open sepulchre, and the swollen tongue, that potent member, refuses its offices of cursing or of prayer. May we never meet with such a calamity but as in the present instance to relieve it!

We were now off the gulf of Tehuantepec, and saw on three successive evenings the most magnificent sunset ever beheld by our oldest travellers. The arched and massive clouds seemed to form a grand temple, with the immense fiery orb flaming between the columns, and bathing ocean and sky in glory.

The fourth day out from Acapulco, we found that we had a short supply of coals, and in order to husband our resources as much as possible, we ceased steaming and put the ship under all sail; and for two days, with a light wind, had an opportunity of judging how helpless is a steamer depending on sails in the Pacific. The distance thus made was nevertheless of great importance before encountering the dead calms off the bay of Panama.

One day at noon, when in this listless state, devoid of amusement, as of progress, while sitting near the wheel, we overheard a whisper of "half-past one" from the relieving sailor, to the one whose watch on deck had expired. The man also put some questions as to the agent on board (who was in charge of a large amount of gold dust), and other matters which excited his curiosity. With so many passengers, and in a steamer too, a mutiny seemed preposterous; so we concluded there was

only an agreement between the men for a glass of grog, and gave the matter no further thought. In the evening, however, walking on deck with a lady, our attention was attracted by two of the crew skulking into the officers' cabins, who strangely enough proved to be the same we have alluded to. The subject was then privately mentioned to the captain, to be named by him as we supposed to the proper officers of the watch. But it was soon spread among the passengers, including the ladies. Fear, apprehension, and cautiousness, combined to decide, that a mutiny was not impossible, considering the amount of gold known by all to be on board, and our proximity to the coast of Central America, where a landing in the boats could easily be effected. A most ludicrous scene now ensued; watches were appointed, fore and aft, lights hung in the gangway, and full grown men, including "men of might" by profession, were soon parading different parts of the deck, armed with pistols, cutlasses and rusty muskets. A watch below was also provided, for the special protection of the fair. John the waiter was poked in the ribs to rouse out and produce *the gong*, to be used as an alarum; and *roast turkey* was unanimously agreed on as the password.

Our valiant guards included gentlemen of the quarter-deck, horse, foot, and dragoons. Indian fighters, lieutenants, colonels, brevet generals, and even surgeons, whose duty consists in staunching the blood of the wounded, now became fighting

warriors, anxious to open the veins of any unlucky prowler under the shade of the bulwarks. Meantime the frightened sailors alarmed at the prospect of a fight, between the cabin and steerage passengers, as they reasonably enough inferred, hesitated to relieve watch. Eight bells struck ; Mr. Trussell, the first officer going on duty, was gruffly seized by the arm, with "who goes there," but luckily for the offender laughter overcame that officer's pugnacity. The brave old sailing master, long used to the shout of "there she blows," passed the guard with the greatest hazard, to look after the more dreaded *thirty inches steam*.

The middle watch was far spent ; comparative stillness reigned throughout the ship, when awful screams rolled along the deck and burst upon the horror stricken ear. The tramp of many feet, the clash of arms, the groans of the wounded, all betokened that the appalling struggle had commenced. Grasping our weapons and rushing to the conflict, we found the scuppers slippery with blood ; for, lo ! a beef had been killed the day previous, and the squealing porkers were scrabbling away in terror from their infuriated pursuers. Hastening with the cologne to the ladies, and lint for the warriors, we assisted in firmly securing a strong cup of coffee, and again turned in to dream of the horrors, of what one of our wags denominated his "first battle." This terminated one of the most critical contests recorded in marine warfare, except that on a following night one of our guards was found asleep on

the cabin stairs, with a cutlass tightly grasped in each hand. The two sailors explained their presence in the officers' cabins satisfactorily to all, and a purse was afterwards made up and presented to the crew, as some amends for our suspicion.

Court martials were now the order of the day ; and a self-constituted tribunal, of members, distinguished for their love not only of justice but of champagne, and brandy and water, appointed "Oregon" as orderly sergeant, who mounted with cocked-hat and sword, and with dirty unmentionables clandestinely pinned to his uniform, proceeded to arrest privates, brevet-corporals, and acting midshipmen for trial. These were severally found guilty of sleeping on their posts, and other derelictions of duty during the war, and fined sundry bottles of brandy and wine, proportioned to the heinousness of their offences, all of which were duly produced and demolished, in the midst of the piping times of peace. Thus the tedium of the voyage was relieved, until we hove in sight of the beautiful and luxuriant-looking coast of Central America.

We were now off the port of Realejo, and although we did not visit it, yet its connection with the Nicaragua route to the Pacific, induced us to obtain what information we could concerning it, from commanders of coasting vessels who had often entered there. The town is situated some four or five miles from the ocean, on an inlet or small river. Off the mouth of this, lies the island of Castanon, having rocky shoals on its southern side, but a bold shore

on the north ; where, between it and the main, there is a safe entrance for vessels from the north-west, avoiding the strong currents next the island. Here, and quite up to the town of Realejo, there are not less than four fathoms water in the main channel. The town of Chinendega lies two leagues in the interior, and the beautiful town of San Leon some forty miles from Realejo. Combined with the safety of this harbour, the fine navigation of the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua, and the abundant supplies of every kind furnished by the country, there can be doubt that this will soon become an important route of communication between the two oceans.

We now approached Cape Blanco, which, with the fine coast of Veragua, were soon in sight. This is one of the richest provinces of New Grenada, and is a very beautiful country, inhabited chiefly by the Aborigines, who are a people of great amiability and simplicity.

Their principal town is called David, on the river of David, some twenty miles from its mouth ; and here men, women, and children go every day in troops to bathe in the pellucid waters. Fruits and vegetables are produced in great profusion ; and with these, and hides and cocoa-wood, they carry on a little coasting trade with vessels, and frequently navigate their frail canoes a distance of three hundred miles along the coast of Panama.

Near San Jose, and not far from the town of David, Morazan, the patriot of Central America,

was captured and shot, in 1842, by political bandits and murderers.

Off this coast we came in sight of the large Island of Coibo, where there is a good harbour, and plenty of timber, and which some capitalists endeavoured unsuccessfully to obtain a few years ago, as a location for a dock-yard for the English government.

Doubling Punta Mala, we now entered the great Bay of Panama, and passed close to a lovely little island, resembling, as an old cruiser informed us, the picturesque islands of the China seas.

We were now consuming the last of our coals, and had yet some ninety miles to run; or, failing in this, to drift about in the dead calms of this immense bay, for an indefinite number of days.—Eagerly, therefore, we watched for the first islands, and at 4 P. M. hove in sight of Banna and Otoque, pointing their welcome mountain tops to the sky.

All the steerage bunks, the orlop deck and deck between the wheel-houses, studding-sail spars, doors, ladders, buckets, and cigar-boxes had fed the devouring fires; and even the ladies were preparing to part with their well-seasoned corset boards, when fortunately Taboga reared its frowning height close on our larboard bow, and we let go our anchor in fifteen fathoms, on the night of the 22d of May: thus happily terminating our voyage of 3700 miles, just as the last sparks flickered from our exhausted furnaces.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Isthmus in the Rainy Season. The Cruces Road and Town of Cruces. A Night and Day in Chagres. Embarkation for Carthagena. Comforts of a British Steamer. Bay and City of Carthagena. Afternoon Ashore. Incidents. Departure, and Arrival in Jamaica.

PROCURING a supply of coal from Taboga, we arrived at the anchorage abreast of the city of Panama on the following day. Here was the little British steamer "New Grenada" from Callao, and our old friend the "Oregon," full of passengers bound to El Dorado. We went on board of her and found nearly three hundred passengers, most of whom had been detained a long time on the Isthmus, and who seemed somewhat enervated by the tropical climate.

Among these, to our infinite surprise, we found an acquaintance who was a fellow passenger in the "Crescent City" in February, and had waited all the intervening time for a passage in the Pacific Steamer. He nevertheless reached San Francisco, as we afterwards learned, some days before two sailing vessels, which had left Panama at the time of our departure in the "Oregon," in the month of March.

This day and the day previous, the rain had poured down during the afternoons in absolute floods, and we had therefore sufficient notice that the rainy season had set in. We accordingly availed

ourselves of the morning hour to go on shore, and effected our landing on the rocks in front of the city, by riding over the heads of our fellow creatures. The tide was very low and the boats could not reach the shore, so the dark and yellow natives came wading out in high glee, especially to get the ladies. Mounted thus on bare, black or yellow shoulders, and clinging with all our might and main to horse hair or wool as the case might be, we were carried ashore, amidst the funny exclamations of the ladies, the ludicrous "cuidado, cuidado,"* of our staggering ponies and our own laughter. We recollected our school-boy rides in a similar way, and the ruling propensity to throw the rider.

Panama was now in a dirty and comfortless condition, the air was hot and sultry, and when not raining the steam rose from the reeking streets in clouds of vapour. We remained there four days, completing our visits to places of interest which were described in the beginning of this narrative; and early on the morning of the 28th of May, started for Cruces, mounted on a fine mule, which we obtained through our kind friend Senor Forns of the Senora Ferniona Ximenes.

We were also so fortunate as to be accompanied by our highly esteemed friend Senor Don Jose Antonio Paredes, who was setting out on a visit to the United States. We trust there is no violation of propriety in acknowledging here our high appreciation of his kind attentions, both on the present

* Take care, take care.

occasion and on our first trip across the Isthmus. Of one of the most distinguished families of New Grenada; occupying the responsible post of British Mail Agent for a considerable period, we hope that when he resumes business in Panama he may enjoy the entire confidence of all Americans.

Thus in pleasant converse, and with a bright, clear morning, to usher us forth, we passed again through the Gorgona gate, took a parting view of the waters of the blue Pacific, and were soon on the Cruces Road on "our way across the mountain, ho," filled, at least, with pleasant recollections, if not agreeable anticipations. The much-dreaded Cruces Road we found disagreeable enough, but with a good mule, by no means dangerous, although doubtless somewhat fatiguing, especially for ladies. After fairly entering the mountains, much of the road is a deep ravine, often thirty feet high on each side, cut or worn through soft volcanic rocks or black sand clay, just wide enough for the passage of a single mule, or sometimes two abreast. This mule path consists of large round cobble stones in loose confusion, or smooth volcanic rock; constantly ascending and descending precipitately, with the torrents of the rainy season pouring along it. Down these the careful mule slides on his fore feet, or climbs them by planting his feet in the deep holes, which, though covered with water, he seems to remember or know by instinct; while overhead the traveller may see an immense mass of green foliage, with here and there a prostrate and decayed

tree hanging on the edge of the ravine, ready at any moment to fall on his head or take its place in the path, as fate may decree. From these romantic and dark ravines, he often emerges into a deep swamp of black mud, where several delightful paths present themselves to his choice, filled with trailing vines and decayed vegetation, the odour of which reminds one of Potter's Field at midnight in August.

Midway on our journey, we halted at the side of a considerable rivulet winding through an opening in the mountains, and seated on the sand or the rocks, partook of a general pic-nic dinner, in company with several ladies and others who were journeying with us. The water was no longer clear and pure as in the dry season, but swollen with the rains, and so highly impregnated with decayed vegetation, as to be almost of a milk white colour. These mountain streams are so numerous and serpentine in their course, as to make it impossible to decide, from mere observation, which of them are the head waters or lateral streams of the Rio Grande flowing into the Pacific, or of the Chagres emptying into the Atlantic.

Near this spot we passed a collection of native huts, where, as at other points along this road, travellers who are belated or over-fatigued, may pass the night, provided they can put up with dirty hammocks, centipedes, scorpions, fleas, and smaller vermin in abundance. We may, however, here mention, that the centipedes and scorpions are gene-

rally harmless, and rarely seen except in the old bamboo and palmetto houses, or in those which have been deserted and closed. We have much more cause for vigilance in avoiding the domestic plagues.

At 5 P. M. we arrived at the village of Cruces, having made the whole distance of twenty-two miles in nine hours. Some of our fellow travellers not so well mounted, were three hours longer on the road, and some of the ladies came in well nigh exhausted, one having had a fall into a great mud pond.

The village or town of Cruces consists of some two hundred houses or wretched huts, situated on the flat sloping bank, at a bend of the Chagres River, and the head of navigation. The streets are thinly paved with cobble stones, and drier than those of Gorgono, which though much more elevated and pleasant in location, is a complete mud-hole during the rains. Cruces can also boast a dilapidated old church; and standing near it at the hour of vespers, we saw a native pound away with a stone, on three cracked bells, which hung on a rude gallows erected in front of the building.

Following the example of a group of our native and Spanish friends around us, we doffed our *sombreros*, and while all conversation and employment were suspended, and the impressive silence was broken only by the low murmuring of the lips in prayer, "the twilight dews were falling fast" and

the sombre curtain of night closed over the scene. Through the influence of our friend Don Jose, we obtained a good bed for the night, and also on the following morning a comfortable canoe to descend the river. The canoes were in great demand, as besides some fifty or sixty Americans, the bullion and specie for the British steamer, amounting to some two or three million of dollars value, were to be forwarded the same day. The natives, therefore, were in high glee, demanding and obtaining of our impatient countrymen most exorbitant prices, as evidence of which they only required from us about one-fourth the amount.

Eleven hours were consumed in our passage to Chagres, during three of which the rain poured down in torrents ; but we managed to keep nearly dry under our oil-cloth bongo, and could not complain, as we fortunately escaped a similar visitation on our journey to Cruces. The river was much swollen, and the exhausted canoe-men were dying, in considerable numbers, of dysentery and cholera. The latter disease they especially dreaded, and when deaths occurred by it, they made night hideous by their howlings in the villages.

The roar of the Atlantic surf as we approached Chagres, was music to our ears ; and we finally reached the house of Senor Don Luis Paredes, captain of the port of Chagres and brother to our friend Don Jose.

Here we were received with great politeness, and

furnished with a bed in the Custom House. We remained in the town till afternoon of the next day, seeing no cause for the dread of sickness, which had filled the steamboat Orus with an uncomfortable crowd. Upon going on board of her and seeing the state of things there, we resolved to remain on shore at the little hamlet recently constructed by Americans opposite to Chagres.

Soon after, however, we received an intimation that the American steamers could not be expected for several days, and accordingly joined some fifteen fellow-passengers, and embarked in the Royal Mail Steam Packet Tay, Lieutenant Chapman, R. N., for Carthagena and Jamaica. Here we found the most complete arrangements, order and discipline, with every comfort and convenience that we could desire. Among her passengers were several English West Indians, and others, who had ascended the Chagres on their way to Panama, and some to California, but learning the nature of the trip, concluded to return.

And here we must do our friends of our brave and generous old fatherland the justice to declare the opinion, that in the quiet deportment and unobtrusive kindness of established social and domestic intercourse, they are quite superior to the headlong evanescence of their impulsive and ambitious descendants.

Crossing the Gulf of Darien, we enjoyed once more the steady trade-winds of the Caribbean Sea,

glad to exchange for this the sultry atmosphere of Chagres.

At noon, on the 1st day of June, we came in sight of the beautiful islands that enclose the harbour of Carthagena, and entered the *Boca chica*, or smallest channel. Substantial white stone water batteries command the entrance from either side, and in the principal one the bright flag of New Grenada was gaily waving to the breeze. Inside of these batteries, the narrow channel passing the chain of picturesque isles covered with fine verdure, debouches into a broad semicircular bay, enclosed with bold mountains of varied outline; at the base of which another battery commands the harbour; while at the summit of one of these peaks, a fortified castle threatens the interior approaches with its plunging fire. Still in line with this and more elevated, the gloomy walls of an extensive convent, frown over the dizzy precipices, or look in lonely grandeur toward the quaint old city, which displays its tiled roofs and cathedral towers at the terminus of this mountain range and northern end of the bay. After receiving the official visit of the captain of the port, we were permitted to go on shore.

Landing on a spacious stone mole, we passed into the city through a large stone gateway, with the offices of the customs on each side. With a population of twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants, Carthagena resembles other Spanish cities in ge-

neral features. The streets are more numerous and extensive than those of Panama, and the houses more substantial, but, not equal in appearance to those of Mazatlan. We saw, nevertheless, indications of some improvement and progress, which only require the fostering influence of political tranquillity for their further development.

But here is the bane of South American Republics, that the minority will not submit to the will of the majority. In course of the frequent conflicts arising out of this fatal departure from the life of the republican principle, Cartagena has been the scene of repeated strife. The convent, on the mountain, on one of these occasions, was turned into a fortress by the transportation of cannon up to its walls, and the *boca grande*, or main entrance to the harbour, is completely obstructed and closed by sunken vessels and similar impediments. When a people manifest such energy in destructive warfare, what might they accomplish in the steady and vigorous pursuit of the arts of peace!

Rambling through the principal streets, we visited an immense variety of shops filled with gay merchandise and eager tradesmen. In one of these we were accosted by two young lads, who volunteered as our *cicerones*, and we were soon among the lions. Listening awhile to the notes of piano, of flute, and guitar, which flowed in rich melody from the balcony of a wealthy *don*, we wandered to the principal *café*, where we found a large, com-

modious building, having a reading-room and extensive bar, furnished with a modern display of wines, mingled with the more wholesome and luscious fruits of the country. A court-yard occupied the centre of the establishment, around which the sleeping apartments were arranged with balconies, thus securing a good circulation.

From thence our friendly *muchachos* conducted us to the shops of different jewellers, whom we found working in fine gold with anvil and hammer, quite "after the manner of the ancients." They, nevertheless, managed to produce some very pretty ornaments, set generally with pearls or fine cornelian. Among the *señoritas* of the city, we saw some fine specimens of the dark and flashing beauty of the daughters of Spain; but admired more the chesnut hair and blue eyes of one who singularly enough approximated to our own Saxon standard of conquest.

As the hour of embarkation was at hand, we now hurried to the market, and found abundant amusement among its chattering *muchachos*, *hombres*, paroquets, and marmosets. The latter are a curious little species of the monkey tribe, abounding in the South American forests, and are easily caught and tamed.

Having remained in the city longer than our fellow-passengers, we now obtained a small canoe, barely large enough to contain two men, and assuming the office of coxswain while our *hombre*

managed the sail, we glided across the bay, with the light spray foaming over the bows and the white coral groves flashing under the keel of our fairy skiff.

Alongside the steamer were, as usual, a host of canoes, and we obtained among them some fine specimens of coral and shells, as a memento of our delightful visit to Carthagena. Sailing again late in the afternoon, we had continued fine weather, and arrived at the Island of Jamaica early on the morning of the 4th of June.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Port Royal. Kingston Harbour. A sunken City. Awful Effects of an Earthquake. Kingston. Population. Climate. Ride to Camp Park. Black Soldiers. Jamaica Mountains. Santa Anna's Family. Visit to his House. Jamaica Railway. Imposition. Plantations. Spanish Town. State of the Island. Voyage Home. Conclusion.

UNDER the nominal direction of a negro pilot, swelling with importance, and of no use, we approached Kingston harbour. At the termination of a narrow peninsula, extending parallel with the island, are the dock-yard and government buildings of Port Royal, presenting a picturesque and agreeable appearance. Passing close to the low sandy point, we entered the harbour, which is a beautiful sheet of water, some three or four miles

in length, and one in width, affording entire security for any number of vessels.

This was once the site of Old Port Royal, and we were sailing over the ruins of the destroyed and sunken city, where it is said that the remains of houses may yet be seen under some portions of the bay. This is probably imagination, but whether so or not, history affords sad evidence of the awful effects of the earthquake in this island, on the 7th of June, 1692.

Port Royal, a city of many thousand inhabitants, who were living in a state of depravity unparalleled in modern times, was instantly overwhelmed and sunk in the sea,* very few of the population escaping to witness the wonderful change effected in the face of the whole island.

After that event, the present town of Kingston was built on the north side of the bay. Its situation is low and sandy, and the houses extending over about one square mile of surface are of red brick, intersected with numerous streets, which are very dusty, and generally without side-walks.—Although the evidences of its former wealth and consequence are everywhere to be seen, yet it is now old, dilapidated, and miserable, in fact a living ruin.

Taking lodgings at the exceedingly pleasant and comfortable house of Mrs. Edwards, in King-street, we enjoyed in a quiet way every kindness and attention, divested of the annoyances and crowd of a

boarding-house; and shall long remember, with pleasure, the agreeable and intelligent acquaintances formed during our residence under her hospitable roof.

The present population of Kingston is about 30,000, and we judged that at least five-sixths of the whole are of the black and coloured races.—Many of the latter, however, are equal in intelligence and position to the whites, and in appearance not easily distinguished from them. We saw also a few of the Bengal coolies, introduced into the island after the Emancipation Act by way of experiment.

They are of a jet-black complexion, with features more Caucasian than African, and are here a set of idle, vicious vagrants.

In our rambles through the town, we found great numbers of shops stocked with every variety of foreign merchandise, and many so filled with the old jewelry or furniture of ruined families, as completely to realize our idea of Dickens' old curiosity shop, and to make the place appear like a city of pawnbrokers. Other streets occupied exclusively by blacks, are formed into regular bazaars by the out-door display of the oddest possible mixture of everything. One of the most extensive fancy and variety stores we visited was kept by an English shopman, whose pertinacity in recommending his wares was quite abominable, and his suspicion of all who entered, was so apparent, that we thought

him the business agent of some London burglars. In all other quarters we met with the utmost politeness. Besides these different classes, there remain yet several commercial and importing houses, successfully conducted by English, Scotch and American merchants.

The climate of Kingston is hot but not sultry, and there is generally a sea and land breeze, morning and evening. The interior, however, is far more salubrious, every variety of climate existing among the mountains, from the tropical sun to the English fogs. The houses are well adapted for comfort, having large apartments with bare lignum-vitæ floors and surrounded with wide pleasant verandahs. They have also large court-yards, lined on each side with little one-story buildings, formerly occupied by the household slaves, but now appropriated to various domestic purposes. Surrounding the common or public square are the old military barracks, theatre, Catholic Church, Wesleyan Chapel, which is a new and quite pretty Gothic building, and the Episcopal Cathedral.

The latter we visited on the anniversary of the great earthquake, which has been faithfully commemorated by special religious services ever since its occurrence, a period of more than a century and a half. This is an old brick edifice in the form of a cross, encircled by a high wall of the same material, enclosing innumerable tombs of the plainest description. The walls and floor of the church are quite

covered with engraved marble tablets and sculptured monuments, which relate the honoured or sad story of many a family now extinct or desolate ; among these is one to Admiral Benbow.

Accepting the polite invitation of some of our American friends, we availed ourselves of a seat in their carriage, and enjoyed some delightful rides into the country. Crossing the square on a fine afternoon, we passed in several streets some elegant houses surrounded with beautiful gardens, filled with flowers and vines, or fine old trees. These are also to be seen in clusters in the country, and are quaintly denominated *pens* by their occupants, who are generally of the most respectable classes.

Journeying in groups towards the town, we met market men and women of every shade and aspect, but mostly blacks. The women carry every kind of burden *on their heads*, from an empty bottle to an enormous basket of fruit or vegetables ; and as this is accomplished without the use of their arms or hands, they have in consequence a remarkably erect and graceful carriage.

Intermingled with these came squads of black soldiers, off duty, clad in the red coat fatigue dress of the " Britishers." Most of them were tall, brawny-looking fellows, and with their dandy canes cut quite a dash, barring their *shin de heela* extremities.

Arriving at the park, we were delighted with the surrounding scenery. In the distant foreground

lay the town with the bay and ocean spread before it, while close at hand towards the north rose the high Jamaica mountains, covered with coffee plantations and misty clouds, and attaining in some portions of the island an altitude of 7000 feet. Within the park are extensive barracks for officers and men, with an arsenal and residence for the colonel commanding.

Near the latter, arranged on the green around a large circular stand, the negro bands of the regiments, composed of some fifty performers, were discoursing most delicious music.

In close proximity were the carriages of the general of the forces, of the bishop of Jamaica and others, filled with charmed and charming listeners; and last but not least, the dashing carriage and equipage of Santa Anna, occupied by his young wife and daughter.

Finding ourselves rather lionized as wonders of California, we thought it but fair to view the lions in return; and in leaving the ground, ordered the coachman to pass in front of the carriage of the Mexican ladies. The blundering or insolent fellow, however, to our infinite mortification, and the annoyance of the fair lionesses, stopped right in front of their carriage. Venturing, therefore, only a single glance of admiration, we drove off in a rage, determined to seek an opportunity for explanation and apology.

Accordingly, on a subsequent day, we called at

the residence of his Excellency, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, which is about half a mile without the town. The house is a large octagonal, gloomy old brick building, surrounded by cactus or chaparal hedges. Driving up the broad carriage-way, we were met at the door by an old negro porter, who spoke both English and Spanish. A servant in the entry received our cards, and ushered us into the unfurnished marble-floored hall. Here we were quickly waited upon by the secretary of his Excellency, who informed us of the "assurances of his distinguished consideration," but that he had a swelled face, and would see us the "day after to-morrow." As we knew that he lived very retired, and had met with a recent misfortune in the absconding of his private secretary with several thousand pounds, we determined not to repeat our visit. Aware, however, of his professed hatred to Americans, who have annihilated his military reputation with his countrymen, we desired his secretary to inform him that we were on our way home from California with specimens of its inexhaustible gold.

It is difficult to imagine what may be the future career of this extraordinary man; but as his influence is as great as ever in the western Mexican states, and those bordering on the Pacific, where the power of the Americans was not manifested, it is probable that as soon as the money stipulated in our late treaty is paid and exhausted, he will again,

aided by his immense resources and address, become President of Mexico.

Having satisfied our curiosity in relation to Kingston and its neighbourhood, we sallied forth one afternoon towards the Jamaica Railway Station, and were saluted on all sides as usual by the demand, "Massa buccra ride? Massa California buccra take a carriage?" but dogmatically sticking our toes in the sand we sturdily resisted all importunities, and outwalking the blackfeet soon reached the station.

Presenting a quarter eagle at the ticket office, it was refused with the announcement, that American coin was not received. * Not disputing the right of the company to its own regulations, we merely reminded the clerk that American gold was at a premium of five per cent. more than sovereigns in Kingston, and requested him to receive our coin as a favour, as the train would depart in two or three minutes, and we had not the time to effect an exchange. Stepping into an adjoining office, he returned with permission of one of the managers to receive it at two dollars, or twenty per cent. less than its actual value in Kingston, and we were obliged to submit to this petty and contemptible imposition, or lose our passage by that train. On our return however at the other station, the clerk there received a similar coin at its par value, not having, we presume, his instructions from Shylock on the subject.

Stepping into the second class of three small carriages, we were whirled at tolerable speed over a tolerable road, through dry swamps filled with scrub underwood, with an occasional fine grove of Mango trees in full bearing.

Here and there was the house of a small planter or grass grower, with a flock of sheep or other of the woolly tribes lazily working in the fields, or permitting the rays of the sun to warm them to repose. At one point on the road we enjoyed an exquisite view of Port Royal and Kingston harbour, with its white sails bending to the breeze, and the grim old man-of-war receiving ship, in stern repose anchored in the midst.

We also crossed one of the pretty little streams which abound in the island and are called rivers, but filled to the brim with the pure element it resembled more an artificial canal for irrigation. On some of these, boats or scows are used, to float the sugar, rum and coffee of the more distant plantations to market. Though there was a great drought in this portion of the island, yet we could see the rain pouring down on the mountains and distant parishes.

Of the names of the latter, we remember "St. Ann's" and "St. Thomas in the Vale," said to present most beautiful scenery, with the finest plantations of pimento, coffee, and sugar. Two sugar plantations called "St. John's" and the "Golden Grove," are especially famous. These we were

anxious to visit but, much to our regret, circumstances would not permit.

After a ride of thirteen miles, we arrived at the fine brick station, or depot as we call it in our Frenchified affectation. Both the station houses of this road are substantial brick buildings, superior to many in our country. Spanish Town or St. Jago de la Vega is the capital of Jamaica, and we found it a dull and dreary town, with few inhabitants, and much like a corner of Kingston. It is situated on a small river, which in some portion of its course runs underground. The courts and assembly were not in session, but under the polite guidance of a young Scotch gentleman who accompanied us from Kingston, we visited the assembly buildings, library and law courts, and saw the government house and offices. These are plain, substantial old buildings, surrounding a pretty little park filled with fruits and flowers.

Influenced by our American lack of veneration for great men, as well as by our lack of dress coat and white kid gloves, we omitted to present our deer skin California phiz to his excellency the governor, though assured of a polite reception. In our rambles through the town we saw and heard enough to convince us, that the love of pettifogging and the worrying of legal terriers, prevailed there to quite as great an extent as in "enlightened" communities generally.

Taking up our abode for the night, in the large

and comfortable mansion of Miss Marshall, a most kind and excellent lady from "the land o' cakes," we returned next morning to Kingston to prepare for departure.

Delighted with the genial climate, beauty, and fertility of Jamaica, we could not avoid a feeling of regret for its neglected and unprosperous condition. The Emancipation Act, and competition of slave-grown sugar in the home-market, are generally denounced as the decline of this once most flourishing colony of England. But, although this decline was unquestionably hastened thereby, its foundation was long before laid in the extensive system of absenteeism of the landed proprietors, and the consequent entrusting of their estates to the entire management of incompetent or unfaithful agents, who too often thrived on the wreck of the properties not already rendered complete wastes by their own negligence, or absorbed by the factorage, commissions and interest—the result of the folly and extravagance of the lordly, but, at last, poverty-stricken owners.

Governed by England during almost two centuries, compare the present state and condition of Jamaica with that of the wealthy and prosperous State of Massachusetts, settled only about a quarter of a century before Jamaica fell into the hands of the English, and possessed of nearly the same extent of territory, with a far inferior soil and climate.

This wonderful contrast, we believe, has resulted *primarily* and *comprehensively* from the effects of two centuries of monarchical government in the one, and of three quarters of a century of free government in the other.

The salary of the Governor of Massachusetts, is twenty-five hundred dollars per annum, or about £500, while the Governor of Jamaica receives £6000, or twelve times as much as the former, being equal to £1000 more than the salary of the President of the United States. If other expenditures are in equal proportion, what then is the difference in taxation? The grand source of the evils under which Jamaica is bowed down is, therefore, to be traced to the whole fabric of government.

Slavery or freedom have comparatively little to do with the question; for, aside from the moral aspect of these, certain it is, that slave-labour would be as utterly inapplicable in Massachusetts, as useful and valuable in Jamaica.

Could our system of *free* and *cheap* government, combined with the energy and enterprise of our national character, be introduced into the whole of the West India Islands, an island-republic might, in time, outvie the greatness of the island-empire of Britain, or equal that of the great Republic; or, on the other hand, should the ambitious yearning of the Southern States, in relation to Cuba, ever be gratified, the problem of slavery may yet be worked out by its own advocates, in the future

transfer of their *entire property and system* to that tropical Paradise.

Quite content, however, with our temperate clime we bade adieu to our kind friends in Jamaica, and sailed on Sunday morning, the 10th of June, in the brig "Ida," Captain Charles Foulke, of and for Philadelphia.

We had scarcely got rid of our pilot, ere the shout of a *man overboard* thrilled every heart. In a moment we saw our first mate, an old sailor, pop his head, straw hat and all, above the waves, swimming manfully, as cool as old Ocean itself. He was, probably, too tough, as well as "ancient fish-like," to be molested by the sharks, so we hauled him on board.

After a prosperous voyage, during which we enjoyed the pit-a-pat of the try-sail boom in more than one calm; gloated over a slain shark; exulted in the indescribable beauties of a dying dolphin, and turned up our noses at the lamp-oil of a dead whale alongside a Yankee schooner, we arrived, June 26th, at the beautiful old city of brotherly love, in sixteen days, one sixth of which time was consumed in ascending the Delaware River, by wind and tide.

Now, kind reader, after journeying together some twelve thousand miles, we will take the liberty to bequeath to you three parting hints. First, if you ever go to sea in the tropics, sleep in the long-boat, if you can obtain the privilege; second, if you

think we have not shown you enough of *the elephant*, but got on the wrong way and slid off backwards, please to mount him and take a view for yourself ; and third, if your patience with us is not quite exhausted, it is time it was, for we have reached

THE END.

